

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

I then rose on a point of order and pointed out that the information relayed by the minister was erroneous because I had in my hand a letter of protest from the president of a CB of RT and GW local which represents men who are at present working in the Devco coal mines, namely, mine examiners and shot-firers. This, I understand, is one of many communications of protest which have been forwarded. Despite the fact that in my point of order I advised that it was a local union from the CB of RT, the minister did not comment. Had he done so, sir, we should not be debating the matter tonight.

On February 11, as reported at page 3484 of *Hansard*, I asked the minister if he had received a communication from the general representative of the CB of RT and GW in Cape Breton, Mr. Gilbert MacIntyre, taking exception to a recent statement the minister made in the House regarding this union and asking for an official apology. The minister replied to the effect that he had received such a letter and that its contents were based on false assumptions. The exchange in the House to which I referred took place on January 29. That is when I referred to the letter of protest from the local union of the CB of RT and GW, not January 27 as stated by the minister on February 11 as reported in *Hansard*.

• (10:10 p.m.)

To clarify the situation I would like to read a copy of the letter which was forwarded to the minister, dated February 5, signed by Mr. Gilbert MacIntyre, general representative of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers. He states:

Honourable Sir:

The January 29th 1970 issue of *Hansard*, page 2964, records your part in a debate concerning benefits paid retired coal miners by the Cape Breton Development Corporation (Devco).

In reply to a question from Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton-Sydneys, you stated: "I got in touch with Devco, no complaint was made either to Devco or to my department. The Union to which the hon. member is referring is, in fact, a small group of superannuated employees, which is 'called a union' and which has no connection with the United Mine Workers of America who have made no request in the name of these pensioners."

Honourable sir, it appears that you have been grossly misinformed on several counts. For your information and for the record, the following comments are "matter of fact."

(1) The so-called "union" you refer to is local 510 (salaried shot-firers and examiners) of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers. Certified by the N.S. Labour Rela-

[Mr. Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys).]

tions Board in 1962 subsequently covered by section 35 of federal Bill C-135.

(2) Local 510 of brotherhood, as well as local 504 (clerical staff with Devco) and local 509 (technicians with Devco), as well as our C.B. District Council of CB of RT & GW and the Cape Breton Labour Council have on a number of occasions complained about the compulsory aspect of the pre-retirement plan.

(3) CB of RT & GW, as well as other Nova Scotia labour bodies (with the noted exception of the UMW of A., district 26) have complained concerning the mandatory act of forcing men on the street at a considerable loss of income. We, to date, believe that the decision of accepting the Devco pre-retirement plan should be purely voluntary on behalf of the individual affected.

(4) There have been numerous letters and wires concerning these protests, which should be on file.

In view of what appears to be you being misinformed on this matter, I believe it not unreasonable to expect an official apology from yourself to local 510 (salaried shot-firers and examiners) for an obvious rebuff of their proud union status.

Also it is our intention to continue to press for the elimination of the compulsory aspect of the Devco pre-retirement plan, for we find it as a "minimum benefit, providing maximum poverty."

Yours very truly,

Gilbert MacIntyre  
General Representative  
CB of RT & GW

In conclusion, I feel that in view of the circumstances the minister certainly owes this union an official apology. Here again, I appeal to the minister to have a complete investigation carried out in regard to the method and circumstances surrounding the payment of pre-retirement benefits, with particular reference to the use of unemployment insurance funds and the compulsory aspect of the pre-retirement plan. I have asked this of the Prime Minister, the Minister of Labour and this minister, and I feel it is the only way it can be clarified. Not only does the minister owe the CB of RT an apology, but also the retired coal miners pensioners union at Sydney Mines about whom he has spoken in a derogatory manner.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion):** Mr. Speaker, I believe this House is the ideal place to seek clarification of problems, but stating false problems and merely seeking to spin out words or just speculating on what has been said can serve no useful purpose.

What then is the problem the honourable member raised in the House? A very simple