

Industrial Activity in Maritimes

only the minister, but his government, and the prime minister. I cannot understand the reaction of the Minister of Industry to this situation. Let us look at an article which appeared in the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* of March 19. This article is entitled "Gloomy View". We are called doomsters and gloomsters by the minister but I do not mind being put into this category. Premier Stanfield is worried and upset about this situation and I am sure is willing to do everything he can to assist. I think this government should be prepared to do the same thing and should not do nothing but make crazy statements. For instance, while the hon. member for Cape Breton South was speaking he mentioned that there was a lack of interest on the part of ministers of this government, and the Minister of Industry mumbled in his beard and said something to the effect that there was a lack of interest in the hon. member for Cape Breton South.

We find this attitude being adopted so many times by this government. These people, who do not have any intestinal fortitude, refuse to get on their feet, and instead make interjections from their seats. This is because they are afraid to stand up and make statements. This is their problem and we wish they would admit it. Perhaps the minister has heard about Peter Nicholson—although he may not have heard of him because he does not go far out of Quebec. Peter Nicholson is the leader of the Liberal party in the Nova Scotia house. He said, according to a press statement yesterday, I believe it was, "that there should be a good, hard look at the steel question and it is a deep problem." Surely the minister would not say he could be wrong.

Mr. Drury: Of course not.

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): You are mumbling again.

Mr. Drury: "Of course not".

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): Of course he is not wrong. Let me read this editorial that appeared in the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*:

The "whither and die" speech on the Sydney steel industry, delivered in the legislature on Thursday by the Hon. E. A. Manson... was the most startling and effective contribution to debate in the house so far this session, and well merited the congratulatory handshakes offered by fellow MLAs afterwards.

Obviously, Mr. Manson had done a great deal of homework, and had given considerable thought to the subject. This apparent fact only served to underline the gravity of his remarks. In effect, he claimed that, unless measures were taken by Dosco and government agencies, 2,000 members of the Sydney steel plant's work force of approximately 3,700 would be unemployed by 1972; in 20 years, the plant might be closed.

This gloomy prediction, coupled with the knowledge that the proposed 25 million rationalization of the Cape Breton coal industry by the federal government will reduce mine employment while it increases mine efficiency, can only serve to focus provincial attention on Nova Scotia's most serious economic problem—the very real threat of social and economic disruption in Cape Breton.

Hopefully, Mr. Manson's speech, following so closely the warning of Harry J. Walsglass, research director of the United Steelworkers of America (Canada), that the Voluntary Planning Board's prediction of marginal growth in steel production in the next decade was "wishful thinking," will prompt the board's steel committee to greater efforts than it has apparently made in the past.

The committee, formed a year ago, is composed of representatives of the board, the Atlantic Development Board, the federal Department of Industry, and Dosco itself.

The minister probably does not even know he is represented on that board. This editorial continues:

During its year of existence, it has been unable to produce a detailed report on the prospects of the industry in this province. In the face of fears such as those expressed so eloquently by Mr. Manson, it should press on with greater energy.

The reason is obvious. As Mr. Manson said, the Dosco steel plant alone accounts for 17 per cent of the province's manufactures. Understandably, the Voluntary Planning Board recently pointed out that "realistic economic planning in Nova Scotia would require detailed information regarding the future of the steel industry in Nova Scotia." No "detailed information" has yet been developed, however.

The steel committee, particularly its Dosco members, faces a serious public duty. It is obvious that the industry stands in need of further investment and product diversification. Can Dosco be induced to take these steps?

I have just received the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* for this evening, March 22. For the information of the Minister of Industry I would point out that it has a very pretty picture of the minister on the front page. The headline on the front page of this newspaper is "Nicholson Requests Debate To Clarify Dosco Situation". So now he must feel it is of vital importance; he must believe it is something to worry about. After all, he is the Liberal house leader in the Nova Scotia Legislature.

• (9:40 p.m.)

I do not mind being placed in the same category as Mr. Nicholson, if the Minister of Industry feels that what Mr. Nicholson says is