

Canada, but I have the honour to represent a district in which there is a very substantial increase in the amount of minerals being produced, and a section in which there is intense activity. In addition to that I wish to remind the minister that by statute the federal government is obliged to take charge of all the geological work there may be in British Columbia. I regret very much that conditions are such that it has been found necessary to reduce this vote, as I consider it one of the most important in the estimates now before us, so far as British Columbia is concerned. I should like to ask the minister if it is not possible to continue the geological surveys in that part of British Columbia particularly where there is intense activity in the search for gold. I refer to the Cariboo and Bridge River areas, both of which are very active and in which a great many people are looking for minerals. Each man seeking minerals needs geological information. The department sent one small party into the Cariboo district last year. I assume their work has been valuable and will be available for miners next summer. I should like to be assured that there will be no suspension of that particular work in the current year.

While I am on my feet I should like to ask if there is any possibility of proceeding with a resurvey of the Nicola coal mines area. I have been asked by the Merritt board of trade to bring this matter to the attention of the minister, and should like to have some assurance from him that the work will be continued.

Mr. CHEVRIER: I notice, with considerable grief, that the first portion of item 162, "for explorations, surveys and investigations, wages of explorers, topographers and others" has been reduced by about \$44,000. I am one who believes that at this particular time the natural resources of Canada should be developed to their utmost. I understand, know and appreciate that the government is labouring under difficult conditions, but I should like to know from the minister whether or not there is any possibility of maintaining those wonderful surveys and investigations of explorers which come under his jurisdiction. It has been my great privilege to come into intimate contact with the topographical surveys, the geological surveys, the hydrographic surveys, the aerial surveys and those of the militia department and others. The people connected with this work have carried out most worthily the difficult tasks allotted to them. I take the greatest pleasure in reading the maps produced by these various branches, and from the reading of them I believe I

profit more than I would from the reading of an ordinary novel. I want the minister to be impressed with the fact that at this time nothing should be done to curtail in any way the splendid work that these various branches of government activity have been carrying on. I should like to ask the minister why the expenditure under the item has been reduced, and what one may expect in the way of reduction in efficiency of the work of these various branches of surveying activity which, up to the present, has been carried on so efficiently.

Mr. GORDON: Answering the question and observations of the hon. member for Cariboo (Mr. Fraser), it is quite true that under the statutes the Dominion government has certain obligations with respect to carrying on geological work in British Columbia. I am not entirely unacquainted with the mineral industry of this country, and it would not need the impulse of statutory enactment to move me towards doing everything possible to supply what money is necessary in order to advance the interests of that great industry. I had in mind with respect to British Columbia, although it has not been definitely decided upon, as I pointed out a while ago, the placing of parties this summer at Bridge river, Cariboo, Kamloops, North Vancouver island and at Finlay river. That program may be subject to some change when the work of the coming summer is finally decided upon.

With respect to the questions put by the senior member for Ottawa (Mr. Chevrier) I would be the last one to disturb the very efficient staff that has been built up through the years in the geological survey. This reduction in the vote will not in any way interfere with that staff, but rather the parties in the field will be cut down and some of the staff who perhaps have not been engaged in actual field work will be used in that work this summer. That will have to be determined, but I can assure the hon. gentleman that the reduction will not affect the permanent staff here to which he has made reference. The reduction in the number of geological parties I trust will not continue during the years that follow, but confronted as this country is with very serious financial problems I have found a great willingness in the mineral industry, represented as it is by so many men active in carrying on that great work, to have economies made at this time, temporary—it is true, in order to relieve the taxpayer and the treasury to as large an extent as possible. I have had the matter up on a number of occasions with the representatives of the mineral industry, and they seemed to be quite