

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. MacInnis: I might say that in January of this year I made a remark for which I was severely criticized. No doubt the opposition has been made aware of this situation. I made the remark that I did not think the 800 miners at Caledonia were getting the support from their executive officers which they could rightly expect. There has been a rumour circulating at home within the last month or so that one colliery was going to be saved. I am very grateful to the minister and to this government for the efforts they have made to save this colliery. There is no doubt that it is the largest producer of the group, and if this mine were to close it would have a most disastrous effect. I am most grateful to the government for the efforts expended on behalf of this one mine.

I was severely criticized for saying the union executive was not giving the men the support they could rightly expect. The rumour which was spread throughout Cape Breton in recent weeks has become a fact. There is no doubt in my mind that arrangements were made between the union executive and the Dominion Coal Company in order to bring about a local preference. Once again, I want to mention the saving of one colliery because it is my belief that the union executive acted in bad faith when they did not continue to press for the continued operation of the three collieries. The executive should not have made any arrangement of any kind until the last shot was fired. They have indicated, by a local preference, that they were willing to give up on the other two collieries that were in danger. This is the type of representation we can expect from anybody who would support the New party.

I have continually pressed for the operation of these three collieries. So far as I am concerned, I have complete knowledge of the arrangement that has been made between the executive officers and the Dominion Coal Company. Now, the opposition may jump with glee, both the Liberals and the C.C.F., and say, "There is MacInnis making a statement that is going to be political suicide". I want to tell this committee, here and now, that my seat in this house does not mean as much to me as the operation of the mines in Cape Breton. If it takes political suicide on my part to bring out the truth in connection with this matter, I will bring it out. I would be doing a disservice to the miners and the different locals throughout Cape Breton if I did not make them aware of the fact they are not getting the representation from their union executive that they deserve.

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What will come after this, Mr. Chairman? The remarks I have just made will be used over and over again during the election campaign. However, so far as I am concerned, I say again that the seat in the House of Commons does not mean as much to me as the welfare of these miners. I will bring out the truth now and any other time in respect of these conditions whenever I have an opportunity to do so; that is what I am doing now. The union executive failed the miners by not making representations down the line.

The hon. member for Gloucester referred to certain recommendations made by the union, namely the one cent tariff on imported oil. If anyone wishes to give this proposal consideration for a moment, he will realize that a tariff on oil imported into this country will do only one thing. It will increase the competition with which the coal industry is faced. This proposal will not do anything for the Canadian coal producer. If the tariff is such that it is going to knock off Canadian competition, it will only bring about an opportunity for the United States producers.

This leads me to the consideration of another point, Mr. Chairman. As early as 1952 and 1953, I advocated, in our own local union, that if Nova Scotia miners wanted to clear up the problems in respect of coal imported from the United States it was a matter of inter-union policy. At that time John L. Lewis in the United States had put himself into a position of co-operating with the coal mine owners by exporting coal and buying into the U.S. mothball fleet. My contention was that this made John L. Lewis a partner of the operators. If we wanted to avoid the importation of United States coal we could do it by working in our own backyard and getting after the president of our own international union.

This suggestion was ridiculed because there were those who put forward the argument, for their own purposes, that John L. Lewis was not an exporter of coal. I believe my opinion was confirmed within the last couple of weeks when John L. Lewis was found guilty by a United States court. This is a clear indication that his policies were in the interests of the large operators. I have made statements also to the effect that our own local union executive would be happy to see Mr. Lewis' policies inaugurated in Cape Breton; that is, fewer contented miners rather than a large number of discontented miners. I have been accused of being immoral and dishonest for making this statement, and yet these same union leaders went to the international convention but never thought about getting on their feet and telling Mr. Lewis