

Emergency Gold Mining Assistance Act

that the emergency gold mining assistance had been extended for another two years and in addition had been increased by 25 per cent retroactive to the first of this year a question was asked at the next conciliation meeting as to what share the miners could hope to receive of that additional 25 per cent. The answer was very brief, and very flat—nothing.

I believe that in order for hon. members to obtain a picture of the situation as it pertains to gold mines and gold miners and the community in which they live, I should go into some detail tonight. I should like to try to present to hon. members here a picture of this emergency gold mining assistance as it is seen through the eyes of the miners. In order to do that, we have to realize that the gold mine operators today are amongst the few, if not the only people in this country who still refuse to accept the fact that there should be labour unions. They recognize them in some places only up to the extent that the law compels them to do so.

The gold miners feel that they are subsidizing this industry twice. They feel that they are subsidizing it in the first place through the taxes they pay, the same as are other Canadians, and of course from these taxes comes this subsidy back to the industry. They feel that they are subsidizing it in the second place by the much lower wages in the gold mining industry than those in other industries of a similar nature. They also see that the same mines or many of them which are receiving this subsidy or assistance have built vast empires in other places through the money that they have earned in these very gold mines. I can give you no better example than the huge iron ore industry in Ungava bay which was handled mostly by the Hollinger gold mine, the biggest mine in the Timmins area. I will give you another example. I understand that McIntyre Porcupine Mines, Limited have bought out the major portion of Algoma Steel.

As I said, Mr. Chairman, I am endeavouring to bring to hon. members this picture as the miners see it. They have seen these gold mines spare no money in fighting the unions right down the line. Back in 1953 we saw a strike of about 9 of the 11 mines in the Porcupine area that went on for a period of 8 months until the men could go on no longer. It appeared that no bill of expense was too high in order to keep the unions in their place. They have seen unions in there fighting for their very life for the last ten years or more but they still have no security whatsoever. They see

where gold miners—men whose occupation is possibly just as hazardous a way of making a livelihood as there is in this country—have no pension. They work a longer work week than does the rest of recognized industry across the country. Heaven knows, if there is any one industry that should have a short week, it is the mining industry where the men work thousands of feet underground. In addition to that, Mr. Chairman, they have seen so many of their fellow workers who appear to have received a rather raw deal as a result of industrial accidents. I realize that that is a matter of the provincial compensation act, but to the ordinary person in the street sometimes it is rather difficult to differentiate between provincial governments and the federal government, especially when the federal government is paying a subsidy into this industry.

If I may, Mr. Chairman, I should just like to read two short letters in order to put one particular case on the record and to illustrate this particular point. This is one particular file on one accident that a man had. I am certainly not going to read all the letters but I should like to read two pertinent letters in this regard. One is from one of the three big mines in the Porcupine area. It is headed "To Whom it May Concern". I will not use the name of the employee but will call him "Mr. X". The letter reads as follows:

Mr. "X", an employee of this company since 1931, was injured at work on March 9th, 1954. After long treatment and hospitalization, Mr. "X" returned to work of a less arduous nature. After ten days his foot and ankle, which became more swollen each day, reached a condition which prevented Mr. "X" continuing at work.

We were unable to place Mr. "X" on work suited to his lame condition and still are unable to do so.

Then here was the letter that Mr. "X" received from the compensation board:

The board, at the present time, is considering a small award for permanent disability which will pay you a pension of \$7.75 a month for life. Before making this award, we would like to point out that information on file indicates that you are in debt to the town of Timmins for relief to the amount of \$185.30.

No doubt you will wish to reimburse this amount out of your pension and, therefore, for this purpose we are attaching hereto an assignment form for the purpose of refunding the amount owing.

Yours very truly,

I could cite many more cases like that one, although I will grant that this is the worst one I have seen. However, there are many others which are almost as bad. In the short time that I have been down here in this House of Commons I have received many similar letters. Of course, as I said before, these people do not realize that these matters are in the main more provincial