

**Mr. M. W. Martin (Timmins):** As a further supplementary, is the minister aware that in many regions of the country only optometrists and not eye doctors are available for patients, and is the government giving consideration to this fact when dealing with the matter?

**Mr. MacEachen:** I appreciate the point made by the hon. gentleman. Members of this particular profession have put forward their views with respect to the coverage of services rendered by their profession. The matter is under consideration and I hope when we get into committee on the bill it will be possible to make a clear statement on the matter.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Favourable?

**Mr. A. D. Alkenbrack (Prince Edward-Lennox):** Will not consideration also be given to the inclusion of chiropractors and their services within the terms of the bill?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I have tried to be a bit lenient with this series of questions but I suggest that we appear to be dealing with a matter which some day will come before the house and perhaps these questions should be reserved for that time.

### COAL

#### REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam):** Mr. Speaker, on September 2 the Minister of Finance said that the government was studying the Donald report on the coal mining industry in Nova Scotia and that when the report was brought down it would probably be accompanied by a statement from the government regarding what it was going to do. I want to ask the Minister of Finance how soon we may expect a statement from the government as to what financial assistance it is going to give to the coal industry and whether it is going to carry out the commitment made a year ago for the provision of some \$25 million to rehabilitate the coal industry, particularly in Cape Breton?

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, when I made my earlier statement the government had been considering whether it would be issuing a statement at the same time as the release of the Donald report. Subsequent discussions led us to the conclusion that it would probably be better

#### *Inquiries of the Ministry*

for all concerned if the public had an opportunity of reading the report before a statement on policy was made.

**Mr. Douglas:** As a supplementary question may I ask the minister how long the Donald report has been in the possession of the government and how soon the government expects to make its statement regarding financial assistance to the coal mining industry in Nova Scotia?

**Mr. Sharp:** The report has been in the hands of the government for some time and was not tabled until it was printed, but there has been no delay in the tabling of it. I expect the government will be in a position to make a statement on its policy soon but I cannot predict the exact date.

**Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton South):** Before asking a supplementary question may I make the observation, Mr. Speaker, that I believe the leader of the N.D.P. has been reading my mail. However, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Is it the intention of his government to stand by the word of the former minister of labour, of the Minister of Transport and of himself by making available to the Nova Scotia coal mining industry the \$25 million which was promised, including the \$10 million contained within that \$25 million for the opening of a new mine at Lingan? The Prime Minister's word is on record in this respect.

**Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I hope that when the policy is announced before long it will be seen that we will warrant the congratulations and good wishes of my hon. friend.

**Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South):** Mr. Speaker, I have a further supplementary question. It is a follow-up again to the question asked by the leader of the New Democratic Party of the Minister of Finance. The Minister of Finance indicated that the Donald report has been in their hands for quite some time. I should like to ask the Minister of Finance to explain why, when I asked on May 30 whether the government had received the Donald report, his answer at that time was that it was expected later in the week. Under what process could a report to be delivered later in the week come into the hands of the Queen's printer and be in the hands of the public in May, 1966?