

Interim Supply

absolute nonsense, but I was denied the opportunity to question it. I was given an unsatisfactory answer and I was denied the privilege of discussing it at ten o'clock.

We are grateful that the government has introduced a 15 year phasing out plan for the coal mines of Cape Breton, with guarantees of ultimate employment to be provided for each and every miner before he is displaced from the mines. This removes the uncertainty and makes the position of the Cape Breton miner more satisfactory than the situation under which he has been labouring for years gone by. It is a good move.

However, I would say to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, who does not know what he is talking about, that if it were costing the federal government \$7,000 per year per man, in the interests of good business the government should make a flat offer to the Cape Breton miners of \$5,000 per year, and close the coal mines out now.

The statement made by the minister was silly, but if they want to save \$3,000 per man, why do they not close the mines and pay the miners \$5,000 a year until other work is provided? This makes as much sense as the argument advanced by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Let us get back to the basic fault in respect of this problem. There is no reason why the Minister of National Health and Welfare should not make the Prime Minister aware of this. The minister has made the mistake. I do not see why he does not take a look at this question, so that he will not make the same mistake of referring to subsidies in respect of the Cape Breton coal industry. The minister should make his colleagues aware of the fact there is no subsidy paid to the Cape Breton coal industry.

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): They do not know the difference.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): We realize that the government has provided aid by making provision for the marketing of coal outside of Cape Breton. Without this, it would be impossible to keep any mine in operation. We realize that this assistance is directly beneficial to the Cape Breton coal industry. It is time, however, that this government became aware of the fact that these are not subsidies; they are subventions paid to the carriers. In other words this money is paid to the transportation industry, whether it is the water carriers or the C.N.R. We can break this down and see what this subvention which is paid to the

carriers means to the miners of Cape Breton. In any circumstances one could not arrive at the \$7,000 figure mentioned by the minister. If we break it down and apply it to the number of people employed by means of the employment which is provided on the railway lines of the C.N.R.'s operation, or by the other carriers, we would find that the subsidy which has been referred to actually is a subvention from which we benefit greatly, but which nevertheless does not provide the answer to the fact that there are lay-offs at Louisbourg.

I am quite happy with the end result; that is, that the miners today, because of the policy announced, will be ensured of employment until other employment is provided through legislation which will be forthcoming. I can assure the minister now—and I think I speak for the other Nova Scotia members—that we will be only too happy to co-operate to the fullest extent when this legislation is brought forward. If there is anything we can do in the way of liaison between here and Cape Breton, we will be only too happy to do it. But, stop raising the bogeyman.

I might mention here that the area which the Minister of National Health and Welfare represents holds a great potential for Cape Breton. When something is good for Cape Breton, it is good for Nova Scotia, and when it is good for Nova Scotia it is good for Canada. Why in this area, where the need is the greatest, has there been this cut-back? Why was the money which was spent down here for almost two years for a hole in the ground not spent above the ground?

• (2:00 a.m.)

This project has cost about five times its originally estimated cost. It was originally suggested to help offset unemployment created by the closure of mines in Cape Breton. This government can dig up money for its own pet projects but it cannot find money for projects of this kind. If the Minister of National Health and Welfare is as strong in the cabinet as the image he likes to project in Nova Scotia, why does he not support this project in his own constituency. Why does he not make representations to his colleagues, particularly the misinformed Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, to continue this project in order that the miners who have been layed off can be rehired? Apparently he has abandoned that end of his riding, but why does he not support his own end of the constituency? After all, anything of value that is done for one part of Cape Breton is of