

*Supply—Mines and Technical Surveys*

**Mr. MacInnis:** The hon. member has just quoted a statement made by the former prime minister, Mr. St. Laurent, which I cannot repeat accurately now, but which in effect indicated that he did not advocate an increase in production of coal in Nova Scotia.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** That is right.

**Mr. MacInnis:** I should now like the hon. member to qualify his statement, because of the fact that the St. Laurent government had loaned the provincial government \$7,500,000 to help improve mechanization in order to bring about increased production.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Mr. Chairman, the hon. gentleman is seeking to engage in a debate regarding something which took place a very long time before the events which I am now seeking to discuss. Much as I should like to engage in that debate with the hon. gentleman, I think it is preferable that I continue with the subject I started to speak on regarding this Conservative advertisement. This advertisement offered the people of that area—

**Mr. MacInnis:** Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order.

**Some hon. Members:** Sit down.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** The Prime Minister had said that—

**Mr. MacInnis:** Mr. Chairman, on a point of order—

**Mr. Pickersgill:**—coal production was an issue.

**Mr. MacInnis:** Mr. Chairman, on a point of order—

**The Chairman:** Order.

**Mr. MacInnis:** The hon. member wishes to continue his remarks without involving himself in a debate with me, and I suggest he will not do so because the former prime minister had—

**Some hon. Members:** Sit down.

**The Chairman:** Order. I must remind the hon. member that he is not permitted to interrupt a speaker except on a point of order, and that a point of order does not involve only a disagreement. If the hon. member wishes to debate the remarks made by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate, he will have to do so later on.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Mr. Chairman, I should like to draw your attention, the attention of hon. members of this committee, and the attention of the people of this country, to what has happened during this debate. We know that the hon. member for Cape Breton South is very worried about this problem.

When he spoke in this committee he was politely listened to by the members on this side of the house. However, when anyone on this side has attempted to speak during this debate, that member was harassed by phony points of order from beginning to end. I suggest that this crisis in Cape Breton is too important to be treated in so frivolous a manner in this committee. If the hon. member for Cape Breton South does not like what I have to say he has the right to reply, and I assure him that I will then listen politely to what he has to say.

**Mr. MacInnis:** Mr. Chairman, I should just like to—

**An hon. Member:** There he goes again; sit down.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Mr. Chairman, I should again like to refer to the statement made in this advertisement, and the statements made by the former prime minister, Mr. St. Laurent, on the subject of coal production which the advertisement described as an issue. The advertisement states that Progressive Conservative candidates are in favour of a coal policy which will increase coal production. That was stated as an issue in Nova Scotia by the Conservative candidates before the 1957 election. If that was not an inducement to the voters in Nova Scotia to vote for the Conservative candidates, so as to increase coal production, I do not understand the plain meaning of plain English words. They said that was an issue, but the fact is that coal production has decreased ever since that advertisement appeared.

The hon. member for Pictou said, I think with honesty, that the problems in respect of the coal industry started in 1955 and 1956. I think he is quite right in saying that, and I agree with him. The previous government was very concerned about these problems, and very concerned about the fact that because of dieselization, because of the rapid development of the Canadian oil and gas industries, because of other technological changes, and also because of the exhaustion of many of the mines—that is of course why most of the mines were closed—this problem was becoming increasingly difficult.

As hon. members on the opposite side know, or should know, the previous government did pay a subvention in respect of shipments of coal to the United Kingdom, in the hope of developing a continuing market there for Cape Breton coal. That government extended the whole program of subventions in any way that seemed fruitful. In Mr. Harris' budget of March, 1957 a proposal was made which, if it had been carried out, would have resulted in very much greater