

Supply—Mines and Technical Surveys

Mr. MacInnis: Perhaps the hon. member would like the figures of the united mine workers which show that between 1946 and 1956 there was a decline of 5,000 at that time and that the mine workers, district number 26, did not get work as implied by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate.

Item agreed to.

230. Payments in connection with the movements of coal under conditions prescribed by the governor in council, \$13,244,900.

Mr. Pickersgill: The minister on May 30 said that this \$1,500,000 which he has now told us is for one year only is for approved projects to provide alternative employment. Will the minister tell us who is going to approve those projects and who is going to recommend them?

Mr. Comtois: I presume and I am quite sure that the decision upon that subject will be taken as arranged between the federal government and the provincial government. They will have to meet together and work jointly on such projects.

Mr. Pickersgill: Is this to be a joint decision? The minister said that parliament was going to be asked to provide this money. In his statement on May 30 he did not say anything about the government of Nova Scotia having anything to do with it. Surely, in this national emergency this government can do something on its own.

Mr. Comtois: Yes, that can be the case but we do not know right now. It depends on the arrangement that will be made eventually with the government in question. These matters will be settled and the house will be informed when we come to some agreement with the provincial government in Nova Scotia. As I said the other day, a statement will be made at that time so that the house will be fully informed of the agreement we have come to on those projects that will be approved jointly with the province of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Pickersgill: In other words, although Caledonia mine closed two days ago, the government still has no project at all on which to spend this \$1,500,000?

Mr. Comtois: I would not say that, I cannot agree with that statement. There are some projects that are actually being studied and very serious projects which cannot be explained right now or upon which no statement can be made because they are not completed. Many efficient people are working on them, including technicians. As soon as we can inform the house, I will do so or some

[Mr. Robichaud.]

member of the government will make an announcement as I told the house the other day.

Mr. Pickersgill: In other words, after 15 months of knowledge that this mine was going to close, the government has allowed the mine to close without having a single project for alternative employment. That is what the minister is saying.

Mr. Comtois: I would not say that. I will not let the matter pass like that. Probably the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate refers to the Rand report—

Mr. Pickersgill: No. I am talking about your \$1,500,000. What are you going to spend it on?

Mr. Comtois: You will be informed in due course, as soon as a statement can be made on the matter.

Mr. Pickersgill: That is the whole point. These people were thrown out of work two days ago and the minister says "in due course" he is going to tell us what he is going to spend this money on. After 15 months they have not got one single project. The minister says he will not accept my statement. Let him name the project if they have got one. I am sure that if the government had a project they could name they would name it, but they have not.

Mr. Comtois: The \$1.5 million will have to be voted in the supplementary estimates. At that time the hon. member will be allowed—

Mr. Denis: It is a blank cheque.

Mr. Comtois: No, it will be in the supplementary estimates. This vote is for the regular subsidies. The amount of \$1.5 million is not mentioned in this vote. It will be included in the supplementary estimates. Perhaps the hon. member just wants to have the final word. I will let him have it if he wants it, but the truth is that the \$1.5 million will be asked for in a vote and at that time he will be able to put every question he wants to put. The item in question concerns only the regular estimates of the dominion coal board.

Mr. Pickersgill: I am well aware of that—

Mr. Comtois: I knew you were.

Mr. Pickersgill: —but the minister made this announcement on May 30, the day before the mine closed, and offered some hope of alternative work to these miners who are being thrown out of work. He says to them that \$1.5 million will be spent. He also tells us now that after 15 months the government has not got a single idea as to how this money