

Supply—Mines and Technical Surveys

trying to capture their dream of finding something big. Very rarely do they go out with the kind of equipment that will lead to something great. Prospecting has become a function of very large companies that have good equipment. It may be just nostalgia on my part, but I think it would be a good idea to work out an arrangement to support prospectors. However, we get no leadership in this direction from the federal department and again the excuse seems to be put forward—"Why bother? This is really a provincial problem." Then when you take it to the provincial governments, aside from some interest in Saskatchewan and a little bit in B.C., they are prepared to let the thing go.

These examples it seems to me reinforce the question that I raised. Is it not time that we did away with this department, in so far as its having ministerial rating, and transfer the agencies, branches and survey groups within it under some minister who will look after all the scientific and research projects, and thus have real rationalization of government organization; or else it could be brought under the Department of Industry?

I would appreciate a reply in letter form from the minister on the last specific question I want to raise with him, which arises from questions I put previously in connection with prevailing rate employees who work for the department. A number of these employees with whom I have come in contact are unable to appreciate why they cannot be put on a permanent basis. The answer that was given to me—and I assume the information in the main came from the president of treasury board—was to the effect that this matter had been looked into and the government saw no reason to change its policy. I suppose the reason is that if these particular employees were given the kind of status they are seeking it would cause a ripple through the whole civil service. The argument put to me is that there are some unique features about the kind of work these people are doing in this department, that there is permanence in it, and because of this they think they are entitled to the kind of rights and privileges that accrue to a civil servant proper, and that prevailing rate employees do not have.

I would like the minister to write me a letter or memorandum setting out in greater detail the answers to these questions and what the prospects may be for changing this present relationship. I would also like a longer explanation than I have been given as to how the situation relates to prevailing rate employees in other departments.

20220—502½

Mr. MacInnis: Realizing hon. members on both sides are anxious to get these estimates through, I shall be very brief. The questions posed by my colleague from Pictou will no doubt provide me with many of the answers I seek, but he mentioned the heavy water plant, and this brought to mind the sort of dilemma the people of Cape Breton found themselves in when the minister announced the plant would be placed in Nova Scotia, and then claimed no such announcement was ever made. Because of this many people in Glace Bay were referring to it, not as the heavy water plant but as the hot water plant.

In the minister's announcement it is quite evident that the phrase used, that this would provide a substantial market for Nova Scotia coal within Nova Scotia, pinpointed the plant for Nova Scotia, but the later contradictory announcement caused a great deal of concern in the mining areas.

As was referred to by the hon. member for Pictou, and by the hon. member for Cape Breton North and Victoria on Tuesday last, Mr. Whittaker, a member of the coal board, made a statement in Banff recently to the effect that subsidies should be done away with. The Prime Minister has assured us that this is not government policy. Nevertheless it is an unhealthy situation when somebody in an influential position, such as Mr. Whittaker, suggests this, because if it were adopted as government policy it would be very detrimental to the welfare of Cape Breton and Nova Scotia as a whole.

This is not the first time such a statement has emanated from persons whose words would give us cause for great concern. I should like the minister, when replying to the original question put by the hon. member for Pictou, to assure the people in the mining areas of Nova Scotia that neither Mr. Whittaker's statement nor the statement made by the hon. member for Coast-Capilano have any authority to back them up. I may say that this hon. member, the parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister, has advocated such a move himself and this, as I say, has caused considerable concern.

We have had an outstanding example of co-operation by the department of northern affairs in helping to provide employment opportunities in my area. I would also ask that the department of mines, in co-operation with the Department of National Defence and the Department of Labour should work to find something in the way of alternative employment for the many miners who are