

for the relief of the Canadian people particularly now when it is more difficult to get coal from the mines of Great Britain.

Mr. GILLIS: A moment ago the minister said that approximately 4,500 men had obtained employment by virtue of these subventions. I should like to know how that figure was arrived at and where this employment was created.

Mr. CRERAR: It was created in the Nova Scotia mines, though I cannot tell my hon. friend in what particular mines. I suppose the figure would be based on the number of tons moved as a result of the subventions which have been paid. I presume some formula would be applied based on the amount of coal that would be mined by an individual miner.

Mr. MacNICOL: Would it not also include the extra men required on the railways and boats?

Mr. CRERAR: No, this figure does not include those men; this is the direct employment at the mines. I am not in a position to say the number of days each miner would work, or anything like that; but in addition to the employment given in connection with the mining of the coal, bringing it to the point where it would be put in a railway car, there was additional employment given to men engaged on the railways and boats. That is wholly apart from the figure I mentioned a moment ago.

Mr. GILLIS: I do not want to say very much about this item, because any time you attempt to discuss the matter of subsidies, at any rate provincially, you are always reminded that they are just gifts from the government, not fixed by statute, and that any discussion of them may cause them to be withdrawn. I do not want to be placed in that position. When the minister gave the figure I thought there might be a possibility that the employment to which he referred had been created in connection with the movement of the coal, because I know positively, without having to guess about it at all, that no employment has been created for miners since the establishment of subsidies. As a matter of fact the reverse is true. On two occasions I have attempted to paint a picture of conditions in that industry during the past ten years. Coal mining in Nova Scotia is definitely on the way out. Since this session of parliament opened I have had telegrams, wires and letters stating that unemployment was widespread throughout the industry.

I have only a word more to say about subventions. I have been employed by the Dominion Steel and Coal Corporation, which controls coal mining in Nova Scotia, for a

period of thirty years, and I am very sceptical in regard to the question of subventions. I would advise the government to examine closely into the question whether or not that subvention has been used for the purposes for which it was intended. I have not seen any benefits accruing to the man who produces or digs the coal. That is all I have to say on that point.

I notice in the estimates that there is an increase of \$500,000 in respect to subventions. I believe that about a year ago, after hearing representations from Nova Scotia, the government did grant that additional \$500,000 over and above the appropriation of the year before. At the time that that grant was made the excise tax on the duty-paid value of United States coal was removed, was it not? As I understood the situation at that time Nova Scotia coal was granted an advantage to the extent of \$500,000, and the excise tax, as I have pointed out, on the duty-paid value was removed. The intention was to increase the quantity of Nova Scotia coal going into Ontario. Well, by giving the \$500,000 to the Nova Scotia industry and removing the excise tax the opportunity for the Ontario importer to take in United States coal was increased about three times over. And while it certainly was good politics, and worked both in Ontario and in Nova Scotia, I do not think any benefit accrued either to the miners in Nova Scotia or to the country as a whole. In the final analysis action of that kind is not smart. I would ask the minister to examine carefully this question of subventions. I do not know how they are paid or to whom they are paid, but I am sceptical as to whether the miners who dig the coal are receiving any advantage from it.

I believe the intention behind the subventions is that of improving the standard of living of people employed in and about the mines, and to give them more employment. The principle is a proper one, but I doubt whether it is being applied to the people who should be receiving the benefits. I repeat that the matter requires careful examination.

Mr. CRERAR: As a result of subventions paid in 1939 the total number of additional man-days-work in Nova Scotia was 1,016,209. The hon. member has raised the question whether the subventions policy has resulted in benefits to the miners. I am not in a position to make a statement so far as their wage scales are concerned; but I suggest it is obvious that as a result of the payments of subventions to aid in the movement of Nova Scotia coal to markets farther west, additional employment has been given. If no subventions had been paid, and had we