

that it also has responsibilities. In that way we will be able to deal with this particularly troublesome problem, and make our task much easier during the war and more pleasant in the days to come.

Mr. LITTLE: I will undertake not to hold up the house for longer than a few minutes but I have a few words to say to the Minister of Labour with regard to holidays with pay for men who work underground. Before the strike in Kirkland Lake one of our mines was giving holidays with pay. The mine operators had a scheme worked out before the strike for all of them to give holidays with pay for the men in that district, but the strike put an end to that for the time being. Since the strike, the mine operators have decided to give holidays with pay, but the labour board have decided against it. I think, Mr. Chairman, that all industries should give holidays with pay, and there is no class of men who need holidays with pay as much as the men who work steadily in the mines year in and year out, especially those who work underground. I think I can speak with a little experience, having lived in that mining area for forty years—not all the time in Kirkland Lake, but about thirty-one years in that district. I know how these men work, and I feel that the board should reconsider their decision and allow these men to have holidays with pay.

Mr. MITCHELL: The decision of the board was merely an interim decision until a study could be made of the whole question by the national war labour board.

Mr. McNIVEN: I think the tribute that has been paid to the Minister of Labour by the hon. member for York South (Mr. Noseworthy) is endorsed generally by the members of the house. That tribute might well have been extended to the staff of the Department of Labour; for, along with the minister, his staff is building into that department something of the vision which the Prime Minister had for the department when it was created back in the year 1908. I believe the minister has in his department to-day one of the greatest agencies for successful war enterprise.

I am going to remind him again of a statement that he made shortly after coming into office, when he accepted the principle that it was better to move industry to labour than to move labour to industry. I would remind him in that connection that Saskatchewan has in the last three and a half years lost 42,000 of its population, excluding the natural increase. I would remind him that his own department has advertised for labour in our country weeklies and in our city dailies, and has permitted great industrial enterprises so to advertise,

[Mr. Martin.]

with the result that our province has been largely stripped of its skilled labour and of much of many other classes of labour. Only recently an agency was in Saskatchewan seeking to recruit some 700 girls for industry. What I have in mind is that the west has been discriminated against in the establishment of war industries, and we have a right to and can confidently look to the Minister of Labour and his department for some assistance in directing war industry to the prairies and in particular to Saskatchewan, for the labour it requires.

As an illustration, the Polymer corporation recently established its plant at Sarnia, Ontario. Its raw material is oil and alcohol, but it overlooked the fact that the only supply of petroleum oil in the British empire is in western Canada, in the Turner valley, and that wheat, the raw material for alcohol, is grown in superabundance on the prairies. Yet the plant of the Polymer corporation was established at Sarnia, thereby making it dependent upon outside sources of supply for its raw materials, and it has to pay the freight on the grain coming from western Canada to eastern distilleries to be manufactured into alcohol. All the western members will agree that that is not right, and that it must be changed if there is to be anything like a balanced economy in western Canada.

In western Canada we have a great pool of seasonal employment. These seasonal employees could be made available for war industry—all the artisan class, the grain farmer, and a great many others who are engaged in non-essential industries.

What we in the west are afraid of is that you are going to move that entire population down here to Ontario and Quebec and thus denude western Canada, and Saskatchewan in particular. We desire to register the most emphatic protest against the continuance of that policy, and we look to the Minister of Labour for assistance. We ask that he bring to the attention of his colleagues from day to day and from hour to hour the fact that war industries should be established in western Canada. Both the minister and Mr. Elliott M. Little have approved such a proposal. We think that Mr. Little is doing an excellent job, and that he could and would and will improve his opportunities by insisting upon a better deal for western Canada labour by the establishment of war industries there.

Mr. BENCE: I subscribe most emphatically to the plea which has just been made by the hon. member for Regina City (Mr. McNiven). Members from Saskatchewan and the plains have time and again risen in this house and pointed out the great mistake which was being