

*Supply—Mines and Technical Surveys*

ganization, and since we now have both a Department of Trade and Commerce and a Department of Industry to look after the promotional aspects and trade aspects in this field, I wonder whether it is not time to consider putting the various agencies that come under this department in the Department of Industry, thus enabling us to cut down.

I believe that in political terms it would be much more important to have two departments of transport, one dealing with air and the other with the other means of transport, than to have a Department of Mines and Technical Surveys. I say this without casting any reflections upon the gentlemen who have been ministers in recent years. It seems to me it is becoming more and more apparent, despite the growth of the mining industry, that in the main the federal role is very much restricted to science and research. It seems to me that the necessity for the continuation of this as a department of government with ministerial status has just about come to an end. I certainly think that mines, and the various departments which are like it such as the Department of Forestry and perhaps the Department of Fisheries, are such that we might consider abolishing them for ministerial status on the basis that all they are doing is providing a technical service. There is not enough work to occupy a minister. My point is that since it is in the main administrative, and is not very political or partisan, it could quite easily come under a senior civil servant and be set up as a branch of the Department of Industry.

I have examined the publications of the department, its technical services, and looked at the general activities and I am not convinced that they could not be handled by an agency or a branch of another department. I think we should be considering means of reducing the size and numbers in the cabinet, rather than increasing them. One of the reasons I have come to this view stems from the inadequacy of this department when we get into any situation such as the Timmins strike. This is the biggest strike in mining in recent years in Ontario, and we have had a great deal of confusion about just what it has to do with the responsibilities of the department. In effect it appears that if the department has any role in this kind of situation it would be very much at arm's length, in some kind of research activity, and even there it would not appear to be very much.

One of the most controversial questions in northern Ontario in relation to the Timmins strike is whether a smelter or refineries will

be built, where they will be located, what will be the situation in terms of economics, where the capital will come from, and what role the federal government or provincial government will play in the location. It is quite evident from the information given to me in the house, and apparent from the questions raised by the hon. member for Timiskaming and the hon. member for Timmins, that the department really has no major role to play in this whole matter. That is nothing to be ashamed of in connection with this particular case, but it reinforces the reality that this, as a department of government, has passed its time.

I think, just as the geographical survey was the first of the great administrative and investigating agencies developed in this country and has done a marvellous job, so this department is now just coasting on momentum, and it is time to raise the question as to whether we need the department any longer. This is no reflection on the research and other activities carried on in connection with the department. Dealing with the question of agencies, my friends in the maritimes and my friends in Alberta are aware there is a dominion coal board, but I have not been able to see that the minister really has any great role to play in connection with that agency, other than to make reports in the house and be some kind of intermediary.

There is one other point I want to raise with the minister, and again it reflects the lack of initiative and the prospect of modernity, if you want, in an extension of the activities of this department. I have raised with the minister the question of some kind of aid for prospectors. I know he will not mind my saying, I got a nice run-around from him, and an even nicer run-around from the provincial minister, Mr. Wardrope, who shares a constituency with me. Obviously the attitude of the federal government is, "Let us not get into something on which it is probably difficult to work out a good policy"; and so the minister is not prepared to move into this matter. The department has not got any interest in something like this that would open up opportunities for many little men, for people who live on the fringes—I am thinking of the geographical fringes—of our society, to get out and follow their interests.

No schools held in the last decade have had a higher ratio of interest than the prospectors schools held in Ontario. In almost every town that fringes on mineralized areas you find people going out, working, staking,