

Supply—Mines and Technical Surveys

I have asked the hon. member for Assiniboia whether he found anything in the Vissac report pertaining to the situation in Nova Scotia that would give him any satisfaction. He said he found certain recommendations in the report which he felt would be of assistance if they were implemented. I would call to his attention the fact that he is not in agreement with the executive of the united mine workers because they made it quite clear as of November of last year that they had the report available and did not circulate it among the miners to whom they were supposed to be directing their assistance. At no time did they bring it to the attention of the local unions. They could not have been of the opinion that the Vissac report—

Mr. Argue: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. It has been said I made the statement that this report contained solutions to the coal mining industry problem. This question was asked of me when I was speaking and I said I thought there were sufficient recommendations in the report to warrant—

Some hon. Members: That is not a point of order.

Mr. Argue:—this question being directed to the minister. I wanted to know from the minister if he thought it contained any valuable recommendations.

Mr. MacInnis: The hon. member is confused and the committee realizes he is by his own confession no expert on coal. Therefore I think he would depend on the information fed to him by the party supporters who are also among the executive directors of the united mine workers who have sat on that report since last November. They had it in their possession and if there was anything in it of any value to the miners of Cape Breton it was their solemn duty to circulate it among the men locally so they could have had the benefit of anything that Mr. Vissac saw fit to write. They failed to do that. I was ridiculed for not being able to get hold of the Vissac report in order to make it available to the members of the united mine workers but the same executive officers who saw fit to ridicule me admitted later that the report was available in their own executive offices last November. If it was as valuable as they claimed it was, why did they not use it among the miners?

I should like to come back to the remarks of the hon. member for Gloucester. Again we have had the rendition of a speech written by someone else.

Mr. Robichaud: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, I had no written speech.

Mr. MacInnis: I will have to apologize to the hon. member. However, in lieu of more appropriate words may I say I am greatly surprised that one person should put together such a mess of inaccuracy. There was nothing accurate about anything he had to say other than the resolutions and correspondence he read which had been sent to him from Nova Scotia.

The hon. member made reference to production. He quoted some figures and he pointed out to the committee how the mining industry was backsliding. I should like to quote from Tuesday's *Hansard* certain statements with respect to conditions in the Nova Scotia mines. I should like first of all to call attention to the fact that not only did this member set himself up as an expert on coal mines but this self-advertised, self-appointed coal critic for the official opposition has made but one visit to Cape Breton, has seen the operations in Cape Breton on only one occasion and to my knowledge has never returned. Yet he has advertised himself and set himself up as the coal critic for the official opposition. I should like to call attention to page 5567 of *Hansard* and what the hon. member said following the minister's announcement last Tuesday. The hon. member said in part:

However, as the minister indicated, this is an alternative assistance to prevent the immediate closure of the mines involved—

It is clearly indicated here, Mr. Chairman, that the hon. gentleman has no interest whatsoever because the minister's announcement in no way contained any assurance that the mines involved were going to be saved. If he had any interest in this particular matter he would have known that over a week ago the local papers carried the story that the Caledonia colliery would close not today, as he indicated this evening, but yesterday. If he had any personal interest in the Cape Breton mines he would have been aware of the fact that it was carried in the public press last week that the mines would be closed. The hon. member also said last Tuesday:

The house and the country know very well that as early as 1958, at the time of the first major post-war shutdown—

He has tried to indicate to the house and to the country, Mr. Chairman, that the first major post-war shutdown took place in 1958 after the present government had taken office. I should like to bring him up to date on what has gone on. I have a list here that will show clearly not only to the house and the country but especially to the hon. member for Gloucester just when these shutdowns started and what was done about the matter or, to put it more accurately, what was not done about it. The list covers a total of 34