

*Emergency Gold Mining Assistance Act*

has been increased, and I do not have to mention again that so far as the price of the commodity is concerned the mines have to take the price quoted each week by the Department of Finance. We know very well that due to the fact that the Canadian dollar is at a premium and with the price of gold being based on 35 United States dollars per ounce the price has always been below par during the last three or four years.

As I said, Mr. Chairman, I do not wish to extend the debate at this stage of the procedure. However, there is one thing I should like to mention. I was very surprised the other day when I read in *Hansard* that the Minister of Finance—I was not in the house when he said it—had said, as found at page 1849 of *Hansard* of July 2, when replying to different members who had spoken in the budget debate:

I have one final comment of this preliminary nature. It is with regard to gold. No hon. member of this house has yet said a word expressive of even the slightest measure of disapproval of what we have proposed by way of an increase in assistance under the Emergency Gold Mining Assistance Act. But among those who have importuned the Minister of Finance—

Note this, "importuned the Minister of Finance."

—in the last year on this subject have been the hon. member for Villeneuve and the hon. member for Timmins. Did they express joy that the government had moved to increase assistance by 25 per cent?

The minister continued:

No, they were withholding their comment. They were not going to be heard as expressing approbation. All I have to say on this subject is that I hope their constituents will take note that this increase in the assistance under this act apparently kindled no enthusiasm or appreciation in the minds or the bosoms of their respective members.

I did not hear the minister say that but I read it in *Hansard* the following day. This was on July 2 and on June 25, as found at page 1617 of *Hansard*, I had this to say with respect to the proposed amendment of the Emergency Gold Mining Assistance Act:

I was very happy to hear the Minister of Finance's statement with regard to the Emergency Gold Mining Assistance Act. This 25 per cent increase is certainly welcome, and the retroactive effect which the government intends giving to that legislation will compensate, to a certain extent, the considerable losses which the industry has suffered because of the premium on the Canadian dollar.

I was not blaming the government for the premium on the Canadian dollar. Then I said:

This government program, involving the amendments which I have just mentioned, was welcomed by everyone in the gold mining industry, including the miners themselves, whose livelihood and that of their families is in that industry. The government is making no mistake in accepting, in part

at least, the representations of the leaders of the industry itself and those of the municipalities which quite recently sent an impressive delegation to the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys.

I do not mean to act the part of a chronic grouch—

Then I said that I thought the act could be extended for three years instead of two years. I think the minister was not fair in his remarks on July 2 when he said that we were not appreciative of what the government was doing for the gold mines. I was surprised because the Minister of Finance knows the situation of the gold mines. The Minister of Finance knows the work I have done in the house pleading the case of the gold mines. I pleaded the case of the gold mines not because I wanted to plead the case of the companies operating the mines. They certainly deserve a lot of credit. As was mentioned by the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys, the mining companies did all they could to increase efficiency in the mines. The gold miners co-operated with the management so as to improve efficiency. Every time I pleaded the case of the gold mining industry I knew I was pleading the case of the people living in the constituency of Villeneuve. I have 10,000 miners working in the gold mines and base metal mines. About 50 per cent are working in gold mines and 50 per cent in base metal mines.

With regard to the comparability of the wages paid by the gold mines and base metal mines, let me say this, Mr. Chairman. We have seen many gold miners leave Malartic to go to Sudbury, for instance, where they could get a few cents more an hour but many times they would come back to Malartic within a few months and say, "We like to be in Malartic; even if we get a few cents an hour less the cost of living here is less". I do not mean to imply that Sudbury is not a good place to live. It is one of the nicest places in northern Ontario. It is a very important base metal mining camp and certainly one of the outstanding mining communities in northern Ontario. Nevertheless, the cost of living is higher in Sudbury than in Malartic and these miners who left Malartic for Sudbury in order to get a few cents more an hour were pleased to come back to Malartic and work in the gold mines. After all, these men are not obliged to stay in a gold mining camp. They can move to a base metal camp. It has been done in the past and they always come back. Why? Because they are happy and the differential in salary is not very large.

So, let me conclude by saying this, Mr. Chairman. We are happy that the government has seen fit to extend the act and to