

Mr. CRERAR: We are appropriating \$75,000 this year to meet requests that might come along from the metals controller. I would impress upon the committee that there is one difference between these estimates and ordinary civil estimates. Civil estimates are prepared for particular projects. On the other hand, in respect of war estimates one simply draws out of the war appropriation a certain amount so that it may be made available to meet a need should it arise during the year.

Mr. GREEN: The minister does not expect as heavy a demand this year as there was last year?

Mr. CRERAR: No; we think \$75,000 will cover it.

Mr. NEILL: May I ask if that expenditure at the Bralorne mine produced any mercury?

Mr. CRERAR: Yes, it has produced mercury. I have asked my officer if he could tell me the amount, but he has not that information with him.

Mr. NEILL: I might add that for at least forty years I have been familiar with a mercury mine in my district, which is only a stone's throw from deep water. We would not have needed to spend \$72,000 to get mercury out of it. It is easily accessible in Barkley sound. I know of my own knowledge that there is mercury, because it was worked in a very primitive way. They had trouble with the Chinamen who did the work. The mercury affected their teeth. The teeth got loose, and dropped out. But why the government needed to spend \$72,000 to get mercury in Bralorne, when it was available right there, at the water's edge, I do not know.

Mr. CRERAR: Where is that located?

Mr. NEILL: In Barkley sound, on the west coast of Vancouver island. It is a place called Sechart.

Mr. CRERAR: I shall inquire about that. The director has no recollection of its having been brought to the attention of the department. I do not know whether it has been called to the attention of the metals controller. However, inquiries will be made.

Mr. NEILL: The mercury is there, all right.

Mr. ESLING: Since the United States markets are closed to Canadian zinc, as a result of which contracts for production are cancelled on the four properties, as recently announced by the department, what market is there for the disposition of Canadian zinc by the Slocan producers of lead and zinc ores?

Mr. CRERAR: I understand that my hon. friend is inquiring what market may now be available for ores from certain mines which hitherto have been shipped to the Metals Reserve Corporation in the United States. I am unable to say. The metals controller of the Department of Munitions and Supply might be able to give information on that.

Mr. ESLING: As the minister knows, the only outlet for Canadian zinc other than that which goes to the British government, has been in the United States market. Now, apparently the United States market is fully supplied, by reason of which fact these contracts were cancelled with the Quebec properties, and the Kootenay-Florence in British Columbia. There are a number of small producers of lead and zinc ores. Where is their market? I am just wondering if some arrangement cannot be made for marketing those ores somewhere?

Mr. CRERAR: I regret I cannot give my hon. friend much information on that. I know that through the agency of the Department of Munitions and Supply certain mines were reopened for the production of concentrates for shipment to the Metals Reserve Corporation of the United States, when zinc was very badly needed. I understand that in some instances that corporation has terminated its arrangements.

Mr. ESLING: In practically all instances. That is the reason why I asked.

Mr. CRERAR: They have terminated these contracts. Why they have done so, I cannot say. I can only assume they have done so because their zinc situation is easier in supply. What may be done to keep these mines in operation, I am not in a position to say. I do not think at the moment there is any other market, so far as I am aware, for these concentrates, other than that in the United States. Perhaps my hon. friend might discuss the matter with the Minister of Munitions and Supply, and get some information from him.

Mr. ESLING: One naturally looks to the Minister of Mines and Resources to tell the public what market there may be, or if there is not to be a market, or if all lead and zinc mines are to be closed definitely and permanently.

Item stands.

Progress reported.

At eleven o'clock the house adjourned, without question put, pursuant to standing order.