

Mr. MEIGHEN: You cannot extract oil by regulation.

Mr. H. A. MACKIE: You can get oil from tar sand but there is a restriction in the lease which prevents its extraction.

Mr. MEIGHEN: That is a point which I would like the hon. gentleman to write me about. I do not know the exact point to which he refers but if his statement is correct there must be some good reason for the regulation.

Mr. H. A. MACKIE: I endeavoured to get the department to permit the extraction of oil from tar sand but they refused.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I must remind hon. gentleman that the House is not in Committee and therefore questions cannot be promiscuously put at this stage.

Mr. A. R. McMASTER (Brome): I did not intend to take part in this debate and I propose that my entry into it shall be of very short duration. A remark dropped by the minister at the conclusion of his interesting remarks, however, gives me encouragement to bring up a matter which I think is of the utmost importance in connection with this and other allied possibilities. I would imagine that the work of the Dominion Government in connection with matters such as the one before the House this afternoon largely depends upon the success of the operations of the Geological Survey. That is, if the Geological Survey is in good working condition we may expect success, and if it is not in as good operation as it should be that success cannot be looked for. It has come to my attention that six months ago there were—and I speak subject to correction—about twenty-four qualified members of the Geological Survey, men whose reputation in Canada and on the Continent is of the highest, and my information is that a very substantial number—I think some six or eight—have in the last six months resigned from this very valuable service. No doubt the competition of mining and industrial companies to avail themselves of the expert knowledge of these men is responsible in no small degree for their leaving the public service to enter private employment. Nevertheless, according to the information which I have received, there is another reason for their resignation and it is that they have not been given the opportunity to carry out, as they would have desired, scientific investigations and to make known to the public the result of those investigations. These men, many of whom are scientists of the

highest repute, have been for years induced to remain in the public service—not for the salary which they can obtain, because that was not commensurate with what they could gain elsewhere, but from the fact that they were doing valuable scientific work which would redound to the material interests of their country and to their own professional reputation.

Now, it has come to my knowledge that these men have not been given an opportunity of completing and making known to the world the results of the investigation which some of them have been conducting for many years. I place the matter before the minister, assuring him that I believe my information to be correct, and I would invite his careful attention to the matter at the earliest possible moment in order that an opportunity may be presented of dealing with the subject.

Mr. BURNHAM: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER. Before the hon. member addresses the House it is my duty to remind hon. members that he is exercising his right to close the debate. Therefore if any other hon. member wishes to speak he must do so now.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The motion calls for a time to be selected for the discussion, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact we have already fulfilled the purpose of the motion and discussed it.

Mr. BURNHAM: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the hon. minister to note that the day remains open. It would, in my opinion, give a very bad impression throughout the country to negative this resolution, because it can be passed, and to show the good-will of the House, without being brought to that severe concrete stage which might in view of the admirable statement given by the hon. minister embarrass him unnecessarily.

The object in discussing this question was, of course, to discover what condition Canada is in at the present moment with regard to fuel and the other necessities of life. I touched generally upon those necessities, because I did not think it incumbent upon me to carry about a pound of butter or a basket of eggs in order to impress hon. members with the details of what I meant. However, the subject dealt with by the minister has been exhaustively and satisfactorily handled by him, and therefore we may repose a measure of confidence upon the fact that the Government is doing all that it possibly can, even to