

of research in connection with our natural resources. In this way the government can equate, if you like, the opportunity for those who lack the same capital resources as some of the larger companies who are presently encouraged by tax concessions to engage in research work to further their position in the economic cycle of events in Canada. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I heartily endorse the views of the members of this house who advocate the strengthening and expansion of the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys in the field of research, rather than the restriction of those activities.

I should not like to see these activities weakened, lessened or placed in the hands of possibly already overburdened ministers in some other departments. I would be more concerned about breaking down some of the responsibilities of the ministers in this government of Canada than I would be in adding to the responsibilities of some who may be already overburdened, having regard to the fact that some of these departments are so complex now it is impossible for parliamentarians to really follow what is happening.

For example, Mr. Chairman, I think it is a great thing for a government to be concerned about its dollar expenditures. However it must always reconcile those expenditures with the fact that the economy in all parts of our nation is being assisted whenever government dollar expenditures will assist it. It seems to me that we must be very alert when pursuing tax savings to ensure that we do not put any area of Canada in an economic condition which we all deplore. We do not want to add to the volume or size of the designated areas in our pursuit of one thing which happens to be produced efficiently in a central area of Canada, and which the consumers of Canada want or need. I can see sometimes that various ministers who are desirous of economizing end up being penny wise and pound foolish.

I think it would be most unwise, for example, for us to be too quick to criticize subsidies and subventions to the maritime provinces. Let it always be remembered that the industries in the central part of Canada which are turning out products are producing tax carrying products and the consumer, no matter where he lives in Canada, will be making his contribution to the treasury of Canada. I think sometimes this fact is overlooked.

The opportunities for Nova Scotia in the field of oceanography, Mr. Chairman, and the challenge that it presents to extend our fish-

eries resources to areas hitherto undreamed of in international markets, deserves the fullest attention of a single minister, rather than being placed as a division in another department of government.

Mr. Southam: I, like other members on this side, do not intend to take too much of the committee's time this afternoon. However, like the hon. member for Brandon-Souris, I feel that the number of participants in this discussion is evidence of the importance of this department of government. I wish to take this opportunity of expressing my congratulations to the minister, and to his very efficient department, for carrying on their work to the gratification of the members of this committee over the past year. The former minister of mines and technical surveys, the hon. member for Pontiac-Témiscamingue, has expressed on behalf of our party the constructive criticism that should be directed toward this department.

Personally, I rose to say a few words in connection with the coal industry in Saskatchewan. As I have mentioned on several previous occasions, the coal industry in Saskatchewan is a very important part of our economy, particularly in the southeast corner of the province. In looking over the last report of the dominion coal board I noticed some paragraphs that gave me some concern. I quote:

Production of coal in western Canada during 1962-63 totalled 5,104,000 tons, a decrease of 444,000 tons from production in the previous year.

The biggest drop in output occurred in the Saskatchewan lignite field which produced 2,069,000 tons, a decrease of 325,000 tons from the tonnage of the year before.

Now, this lignite field, as most hon. members know, is in the riding of Moose Mountain and is a very important part of the economy. I continue to quote from the report:

Alberta bituminous coal production was 558,000 tons, a decrease of 124,000 tons; and British Columbia and Yukon production was 882,000 tons, a decrease of 120,000 tons. The only production increase in the west was in Alberta sub-bituminous coal. After many years of steady decline, followed by a levelling off last year, sub-bituminous output rose to 1,595,000 tons, an increase of 125,000 tons.

Of course, the significance of this increase stemmed from the fact that it could be ascribed to the first six months of digging coal for the Wabamun thermal electric plant, recently enlarged by the addition of a 150,000 kilowatt coal fired generating unit.

Mr. Benidickson: I very much hesitate to interfere with the hon. member for Moose Mountain, who is himself very courteous to