

Supply—Regional Development

I have always contended that this piece of legislation, which grants a crown corporation authority to acquire land beneath the seas adjacent to Cape Breton, is a tacit recognition that the right to minerals under the sea in such an area vests in Nova Scotia. As I said, I shall be interested to know what is to be purchased from Dosco and at what price. Also, are the powers of acquisition under the bill not a tacit recognition that the mineral rights I have referred to vest in the province? Or, on the other hand, is it intended to follow the pronouncements of the Prime Minister in this regard, given without the advice of the Supreme Court of Canada?

The minister made statements about negotiations having gone on with unions. He talked of more than one union, using the word "unions". He also spoke of "negotiations". I point out that Devco officials coming before the committee said there were no negotiations. Those officials said they had dealt with one union only, after the retirement plan had been finalized. I point out that prior to the time the Devco people said there were no negotiations and prior to the meeting in which those officials said they had talked to about 90 per cent of the membership of one union, the minister said these words, as reported on page 3010 of *Hansard* for November 21, 1968:

I understand that negotiations with the unions are still continuing on this subject.

The minister did not seem to know what was going on, yet suddenly he has become all knowing on the subject. The Prime Minister did not seem to know what Devco was. When the question was addressed to him he referred the matter, in the presence of the minister, to another minister, and then in turn to a third minister. As I say, the minister who should have answered was sitting there at that time. The Prime Minister did not know who was responsible until the report was presented to him.

• (8:10 p.m.)

The legislation specifies that there are other unions involved in this. I do not suppose the reference to these other unions would have been included if they had not meant that Devco should have been talking to their representatives before the finalization of any retirement or pre-retirement plan.

Before the day is over I think the minister will be quite familiar with the legislation he was supposed to have known before he came

[Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond).]

into the chamber. Let me refer to page 16 of this act, section 35 (2):

Each trade union that on the day preceding the coming into force of this act was certified under the Trade Union Act of the province of Nova Scotia as a bargaining agent for persons employed by the companies in connection with the works and undertakings declared by subsection (1) to be works for the general advantage of Canada shall be deemed to have been certified under the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act on the day this Act comes into force as the bargaining agent for the person so employed by the companies in respect of whom it was so certified as bargaining agent.

Here is a clear indication in the legislation itself that Devco should at least have to talk to the various unions involved. The minister spoke of his experience with trade unions. He said that if Devco so wished it could arbitrarily pension men off at the age of 60.

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): The hon. member did not understand what I said. I never said that.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): I did not understand a lot that the minister had to say about this particular development plan. The fact remains it is pretty hard to understand him when he does not understand the legislation put forward.

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Speak for yourself.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): The minister made mention of the preamble while talking about the over-all plan presented by Devco. This over-all plan says: "It is the intention to reduce coal mining employment as quickly as possible." I invite all members on the Liberal side to read the preamble in this legislation and tell me how those two statements can be reconciled. There is nothing in the preamble to indicate that it is intended to phase out these mines. In fact, the preamble says that every effort should be made to revitalize and modernize the mines.

Does the minister think that miners in Cape Breton should be grateful for what is being done with respect to pensions? Perhaps the hon. gentleman would take the opportunity when he gets to his feet to tell us what the pension set-up will be for the chairman and the other officers of Devco. I remind each and every member of the committee that under the act setting up the corporation the chairman and the president are appointed for seven years. The phrase used is: "not exceeding seven years". The government is giving them a pension. Are these pensions to be just