

Mr. STITT (Nelson): The prospector must come first. It is not fair to compare a prospector with a man who owns either a home or land which may be expropriated by a railway company. The home or land owner has an investment only in that home or land, while the average prospector has invested many years of his life. He goes out into the woods and fields and endures all kinds of hardship, half the time eating salt pork and bacon. I know whereof I speak, because I have done it myself. He goes far afield and he makes these strikes. Then, of course, the mining company comes in and acquires the claims. The statement that the mines are exploited for the benefit of a few is not correct, because thousands of people own shares in mining stocks and are in receipt of big dividends from them. It is true that the biggest stock owner receives the largest dividend.

In the case of this Great Bear lake strike. I happen to know Gilbert La Bine, who made it; how he travelled the 2,000 miles into the Arctic, pulling behind him a toboggan with his tent and grub, later leading by hand his partner who was also a prospector and who was snow blind. When he arrived at La Bine point, he found that he could not take his partner any further and he had to make camp. After he had fixed his partner up in the camp and got food for him, he looked around him and made this discovery. The La Bine brothers have been prospecting for twenty years. They have made their strike after a lifetime of toil.

Mr. IRVINE: Why not, as a reward, make this prospector the next governor general of Canada?

Mr. STITT (Nelson): If we have anything against him, we may do that. It is very unfair to say to that man: we are going to take away from you what you have been all your life looking for. A number of people are behind this grubstaking of La Bine; there are hundreds of people interested in it. It is known as the Eldorado Gold Mining Company, with about \$2,000,000 worth of shares held all over Canada.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: How much money has so far been invested in the development at Great Bear lake?

Mr. STITT (Nelson): I imagine about \$30,000 or \$40,000 on prospecting, exclusive of development work now going on. I am interested in that country myself, and to send one prospector in there costs on an average \$1,500. It costs from seven to eight dollars a day to feed your prospector, over and above

what you pay him for his work. It would be most unfair at this time, before the area has been proved, to talk of expropriating it. The government can always protect themselves. If they want that radium, they can forbid its export just as they forbid the export of gold; but to talk about taking it away from the prospector, well, you had better not come up to my constituency and talk that kind of thing.

Mr. COOTE: It is quite evident from the remarks of the last speaker that prospecting for our mineral resources has been carried on in a very haphazard way indeed. It is time these activities were carried on much more thoroughly and systematically than they have been in the past. Many geologists and mineral and petroleum engineers are at present without employment. The government has lately paid off from the air force nearly forty married men, some of the most competent fliers that we have in Canada, with a splendid record of war service. Some of them have flown across the great mineral areas of the Northwest Territories. Let us employ these men to take aeroplanes into that area, carrying geologists who will prospect the country in a thorough manner. I sympathize with the prospector and would want to see him well taken care of. At the present time the prospectors as well as the investing public are taken care of by the promoter. There has been too much money put into the development of our petroleum and mineral resources for the amount of production that has taken place. I say that the time has come when we should tackle this problem in a business-like way. We have aeroplanes and fliers, and let us send these geologists up there well equipped to prospect our mineral wealth in that area. Let us start in Canada a real national policy for the development of our mineral resources. Now is the time to do it; for as the hon. member for Wetaskiwin has said, the longer we wait the less mineral resources we will have to take care of. What is the use of reserving all these mineral resources to the crown and then leasing them out to promoters to be used as a basis for stock promotions which are loaded on an unsuspecting public at prices which can never return dividends? In a few cases, of course, handsome dividends may be paid, but I contend that they should be returned to the state.

Mr. IRVINE: One more remark. It is a rather strange argument that because one or two prospectors have happened to wander into this north country and have thereby obtained certain so-called legal rights, the government