

*Supply—Mines and Technical Surveys*

brought to the attention of hon. members as the potential leader of this so-called New party. I call to his attention the fact that according to the C.B.C. the other evening the other potential leader of the party announced that he had no intention of running in the riding of the hon. member for Assiniboia, and that he is not going to shoulder the hon. member aside. The hon. member can rest assured that he will have a riding to run in. He is not going to be shouldered aside.

The hon. member has indicated that if he had the opportunity to bring it about a policy would be announced in a very short time. I call his attention to the fact that the other potential leader has already announced his views on the coal situation. At a seminar in Montreal very recently he said he considered that coal was obsolete. This makes him very popular with the Cape Breton miners.

Mention was made of the Vissac report. I should like to take a few moments to say a few words on that report. Mr. Rand was considered an outstanding man in the labour field. He was appointed as chairman of the royal commission on coal. Everybody was in agreement on that. His reputation was such that we believed we could expect a very fine report from this gentleman. Of course, in all fairness, let it be said that the Prime Minister could not be accused of being politically partisan about the choice. We all know the political affiliations of Mr. Rand.

Following the presentation of the report, an interdepartmental committee was set up to study it. Is it any wonder that the committee has taken as long as it has to come to a decision on a report such as this? I passed my opinion on the Rand report 2½ hours after I saw it for the first time. I had made up my mind that it was not what we could rightfully expect. I call the committee's attention for a moment to page 15 of the report. This is what we find:

What are left to these three modes of energy, apart from metallurgy and the chemical field, are large space heating, fuel for light and heavy industry, and thermal power. On the assumptions mentioned, if not at the moment, then within ten or fifteen years, in these there will probably be a field of competition into which coal may more effectively enter.

Anybody who studies the report can turn to pages 24 and 25 where this will be found:

Within a period of say 15 years, supporting alternative sources of economic activity may be at a level permitting such a reduction without severe dislocation of men or community.

This is a direct contradiction of what the commissioner said 9 or 10 pages previously. If we turn to page 42 we shall find a further contradiction. Here the commissioner goes on to say:

What may be suggested is that beyond 10 or 15 years—

[Mr. MacInnis.]

The same number of years as mentioned previously in which he stated that coal could more effectively enter the market. I continue:

What may be suggested is that beyond 10 or 15 years coal may be pushed still further into the background of fuels.

This is only a very slight indication of the number of contradictions that are to be found in this report. Is it any wonder that an interdepartmental committee had to take so much time to decipher what is meant? I should like to point out for the benefit of hon. members that the interdepartmental committee was set up to study the financial recommendations of the report and nothing else. The terms of reference of the committee did not contain anything whatsoever with respect to the closing of any collieries. They were specifically directed to study the financial recommendations of Mr. Rand.

Now the Vissac report comes into the picture. What happened was that the coal board was studying the Rand report. They found that it was not an easy task for a group of men sitting around a table to exchange ideas and put them across in that type of meeting. Therefore it was decided that each individual would take it upon himself to make a finding on the report and then exchange their findings among the group. This so-called Vissac report seemed to have everything.

I corresponded with the chairman of the dominion coal board and was advised by the then chairman, Mr. Uren, that this report was not to circulate outside the confines of the coal board itself. It was a departmental document and was not available to me at that time as a member of parliament. I had serious doubts as to whether or not it was confined within the board or department. In fact, I might go so far as to say I was quite sure it was circulated in Nova Scotia. Following upon the receipt of the correspondence from Mr. Uren I sent forward this information. That is the only thing I could have done. I was instructed that the report was circulated nowhere outside the board and was not available to me. I passed on this information to different locals. After I had done so it was brought to my attention by the executive of the united mine workers that they would send the report on to me in order to bring me up to date on what was going on in Ottawa.

The minister of mines in the Nova Scotia legislature had a copy of this report. He was asked to table it but he did not do so. He informed the Nova Scotia legislature that it was given to him as a confidential document and therefore he could not table it. I therefore suspect that everybody else who had it, had it under a confidential arrangement.