

Supply—Mines and Technical Surveys

opportunity given to me last session, to report on the activities of the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys. I speak before this assembly very humbly, because in large part the work of this department is of a technical and professional nature. I found there were some 300 employees who had doctorates from various universities in technical and specialized fields. I want to assure this assembly that it has been a delight to me, representing parliament and the people of Canada, to be the head of this department because I have found the greatest respect for our wishes and desires on the part of the officials. At all times they really wish to follow the wishes of our democratic parliament despite their great skills and technical knowledge.

The department is known as the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys but as I have travelled throughout the country since assuming office I have found myself generally referred to as the minister of mines. I want to assure my colleagues I have learned I am not the minister of mines. Indeed only about a quarter of our staff is devoted to the mining industry. If one looks at the government telephone directory, as I did after being appointed to office, he will readily recognize that the mines branch represents approximately only a quarter of the administrative duties and only a quarter of the personnel in this department, engaged on our behalf to serve the people of Canada.

In addition to the mines branch therefore there are many other aspects and branches that deserve the attention of the committee in examining the estimates of the department. So far as the over-all estimates are concerned, I think this department was one of the few that did not come before the house last year with supplementary estimates. I cannot say we will maintain that record in the coming year. We have one or two projects that we think cannot be deferred and we may come forward with supplementary estimates later in the year. If hon. members will examine the estimates for 1964-65, compare them with 1963-64 and keep in mind the necessary increases, particularly in salaries, I think they will find that the changes in our requests to the committee of supply this year are very modest indeed.

I am also responsible for reporting to parliament for the dominion coal board, whose estimates hon. members will find on page 228. There is no change in policy there. It is simply a matter of estimating the amount of tonnage that will move forward under the statutory approval of parliament already given.

Perhaps I might summarize very briefly some of the activities that have gone on since I last reported to the committee of supply. I have said that I inherited from the hon. member for Pontiac-Témiscamingue a fairly tidy shop. I think he will agree with me that the department is not a very controversial one at any time, but rather a most worthy department and one that I think has served Canada very well.

I have just returned from a visit to Alberta where I attended the 21st annual conference of mines ministers of the various provinces. For a while they felt they should meet solely at the provincial level, but for the last three days they have allowed federal representatives to attend on an observer basis. My predecessor as minister, the hon. member for Pontiac-Témiscamingue, was the first federal representative invited to attend. I think progress is evident here. There were 400 representatives in attendance at the conference in Alberta. It has grown from a meeting of provincial mines ministers, their deputies and officials to the extent that representatives of industry and others connected with both provincial and federal governments are now attending in very broad measure, and I think to mutual advantage.

The value of mineral production in Canada is perhaps not always recognized but it is now at the level of about \$3 billion a year. Consequently there is a growing demand for scientific investigation covering all steps in the extraction, use and marketing of minerals and their derivatives. Our department contributes very substantially to this end. In some other phases of our work, particularly surveying and field explorations, there have been advances and innovations in work methods and instruments which I think should be reported to the house, because while in the initial stage the apparatus and machinery involved are expensive they have resulted in the end in an efficiency which I think is very much appreciated by those concerned.

Members of the house have not had the opportunity of seeing, as it has been my privilege to see as the new minister, the work being done by the department in the remote Arctic. I give as an example the polar continental shelf project carried on by the department, which is now in its fifth year. It covers land, sea and sea bottom with closely spaced hydrographic, geological, gravimetric, seismic, geomagnetic, glaciological and topographical tests and surveys. This empha-