

*Supply—Mines and Technical Surveys*

**Mr. MacLellan:** The number one distortion of the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate is when he says now in this chamber that in the election of 1957 and 1958 the coal issue was whether or not the Conservative party guaranteed increased production of coal. By no means was that the case. The representation made by the Prime Minister, the premier of Nova Scotia and others in Nova Scotia was that they would do their best to face the problems of the coal industry and give them the full attention they deserved. The people of Nova Scotia elected 10 Conservative members in 1957 over one in 1953. Why was it that they turned down the representatives of the previous administration at that time? The reason was that clearly in the opinion of the people of Nova Scotia the Liberal party had turned their backs on the coal industry and had abandoned the miners to any fate that might befall them. However, they now pretend, or the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate does so, that if the Liberal government had been maintained in power they would have accomplished great things for the coal industry.

As a matter of fact what the people of Nova Scotia saw in 1957 was Liberal cabinet ministers running around Nova Scotia saying that the mines that could not be continued in operation on an economic basis would have to be closed. What the people of Nova Scotia saw was the then prime minister coming down to New Brunswick and making speeches to the effect that, as the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate admits, the coal industry was obsolete.

The prime minister of the day came down to New Brunswick without a single suggestion as to what could be done regarding our declining coal markets other than to say that it was hardly fair to future generations of Canadians to be digging coal out of the ground for use as a fuel. His excuse as to why the Liberal party had abandoned these mines and miners was that coal was much too valuable in 1957 to be placed on the fuel market in Canada but must be saved for the future. Now, of course, the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate comes here and pretends that the then prime minister was simply against any expansion of the industry.

It was much more than that, Mr. Chairman. In my mind and in the minds of the great majority of Nova Scotians, as that election of 1957 proved, he had indeed turned his back on the Nova Scotia coal industry.

The hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate has made a great to do here this morning about the so-called power program offered by the St. Laurent government in 1957. He says "If we had continued in power and if the

[Mr. MacInnis.]

thermal program that we had set forth had been set up, and if it were in operation today, then there would be no problem with regard to the Nova Scotia coal industry".

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I did not say that.

**Mr. MacLellan:** What happened? After neglecting this problem for years; after mine after mine had been closed and the people who worked in the coal mines and their families had been thrown out on the streets in Cape Breton island and elsewhere in Nova Scotia, on the eve of the election in 1957 the Liberals came back to the people of Nova Scotia hoping once more to catch them in one of their pre-election gags. The gag this time was a thermal power program. The figure of \$200 million was mentioned. This money was going to be used to capitalize thermal power plants in Nova Scotia. It was going to give us cheap power. It was going to create a great market for coal.

But, Mr. Chairman, you will note that when the hon. member was speaking he referred to the comments of the premiers of the Atlantic provinces on the matter of the power proposition put forward by the Liberal government at the time. I quote from the advertisement which the hon. member has been kind enough to pass over to me. He quoted Premier Stanfield as saying this:

...And on no issue is there greater disagreement than our stand on coal policy and the position taken by the Liberal party.

And the advertisement continues:

The question of the federal thermal power proposals are not an issue. Premier Stanfield has insisted only that Nova Scotia coal be used as the fuel and that the cost of power be made cheaper as the result of the thermal program.

What was the offer of the St. Laurent administration? They said they would provide thermal power plants but when they were asked if they would give us subventions on coal to be used within the maritime area in order to provide power at a reasonable cost from those plants, they said no. When the present Minister of National Revenue asked the then minister of northern affairs, Mr. Lesage, in this chamber if the government of that day would consider subventions on Nova Scotia coal to be used in those power plants, the answer of Mr. Lesage was no, because subventions would not be necessary. Why would subventions not be necessary? Even the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate should know that residual oil, bunker C oil, was always cheaper than coal.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** It was not cheaper at that time.

**Mr. MacLellan:** The hon. member says it was not cheaper at that time. That is just the point. Why was it not cheaper? It was