

through an order whereby it was provided that in all oil leases issued thereafter a clause might be inserted protecting the lessee against royalty on his oil or gas up to 1930. That was done in order to induce to the utmost extent oil and gas prospecting in this country. All these efforts have resulted in, at least, a very great deal of prospecting and, as a consequence, the Dominion Treasury has benefited to a very considerable extent. I think if a comparison was made between the results to the Treasury on the one hand, and the results to the prospector on the other, the Dominion Treasury would be found to be the furthest ahead a long way. We have had a lot of money from oil leases, a great deal of money has come to the Treasury; but taking it all in all, and in the aggregate, not very much has come to the prospector. Believing that there was reason to expect better results in the near future, steps have recently been taken whereby that clause is no longer inserted in oil leases, and the Government will be empowered, as respects all leases issued after the change was made some months ago, to collect such royalty as may be deemed to be fair and reasonable in respect of oil and gas production. Also leases now held are being cancelled much more quickly than in past years, the object being to reduce as far as possible those within the exempted class and to bring them as far as possible within the non-exempted class, to the end that the State may conserve what may be deemed the rights of the whole people of Canada in respect of oil and gas deposits. But let it not be thought that this is a field where the State is likely to intervene as a commercial exploiter, and to succeed better than private enterprise. It seems to me that this field of activity is one where private enterprise will succeed most, and where the results will consequently be best for the State as well as best for the citizens of the State. So much for that.

As regards the source of oil from oil shales, not very great progress has yet been made. We have a number of officers who have given considerable attention to that work, and some investigation has taken place. It is our great desire that investigation be made more thorough and more expeditious. We have great oil shale deposits in New Brunswick, in Nova Scotia and in Alberta; I think, as well, there are some in Prince Edward Island. Of course the extracting of oil from oil shale is a much less agreeable way of getting it than merely watching it come through a pipe

[Mr. Meighen.]

out of the earth. It will not likely be found that oil can be produced from oil shales in immediate competition with oil deposits in the bosom of the earth. Nevertheless it is of great value to the Dominion that those oil shales exist; and I think the time has come when we ought to try to spare the money, if we can, to investigate their possibilities. I take second place to none in the desire that the utmost progress be made as to coal, as to gas, as to oil, as to peat, as to every other source of fuel supply, to the end that this Dominion in that regard, as in all others, be to the utmost extent economically independent, and that we be to the least possible degree dependent upon the legislation, or the whim, of any other country. We cannot move too fast to that end, consistent with our financial capacity; and so far as my influence goes I intend to urge that these investigations proceed. I believe, however, that more has been done than is generally known to the people of Canada. Indeed one of the things that come under the notice of public men, and I am sure hon. gentlemen opposite have had the same experience, is this: It is very general to find an eager and honest desire for investigation and an impatience that all these things are not known; but those very men who express such impatience usually know themselves very little as to what actual investigation has gone and is going on. To my own knowledge services are being rendered by public officials, officers of departments and their branches—services rendered assiduously and efficiently and that possibly have been rendered for years. Nevertheless resolutions are received from public bodies, boards of trade and the like, demanding that something be done immediately to institute investigation into the very thing which has long been investigated, and thoroughly investigated, and in respect of which reports have been issued and findings made that the parties complaining have never even taken the trouble to refer to or read. I would commend to hon. gentlemen the desirability of communicating with the department in such matters. We will be only too ready to give the results of the inquiries that have been made by its scientific officers; and invite them further to stand behind any estimate that may be presented—estimates which are necessary and which will permit the officers of the department to achieve greater results more expeditiously, and more thoroughly.

Mr. H. A. MACKIE: What objection is there to amend the regulations so as to permit the extraction of the oil from tar sand?