

Supply—Mines and Technical Surveys

of lake Nipigon—there is a dotted line on several maps indicating it was provisional—all the way up to northern Manitoba near Hudson bay.

According to the information that was filed showing the correspondence between the provincial government of Ontario and the federal government the actual site or route of the road was in abeyance until a number of surveys, including aeromagnetic and geologic surveys, had taken place. I wonder whether the minister can give me any indication as to what activity is being carried on in his department in that particular stretch that bears upon this whole road idea?

I know that the two departments co-operate and have an intimate liaison. We in that part of the country would like to know when it is likely that some kind of road site will be arrived at between the provincial government and these two government agencies, one of which the minister represents. If he could fill me in as to how the surveys are going, when they are likely to be completed and whether there is any indication yet as to what recommendations his department is going to make as to the best site of the road in order to take advantage of the mineral possibilities in that great stretch, I should be glad if he would do so. I repeat again that I have reference to this projected road that would run from north of lake Nipigon slashing northwest across the Patricia district and touching up near Hudson bay over the border of Manitoba or just about the border of Manitoba. It is an area which at the present time has almost no road facilities at all.

Mr. Comtois: It is not very easy to answer that question right now. Could that question be asked at some other time by the hon. member? The information must be obtained within my department and through the department of northern affairs. We give advice but the real information he wishes to secure could be obtained more easily and more accurately through the northern affairs department.

Mr. Fisher: I am little bit fed up with the fact that the department of northern affairs which is part of the vision has kept projecting this road as a dotted line. It looks good when you have a map of Canada in front of you and there right across the centre of it you have this dotted line of this projected road that would have a mileage of something between 600 and 800. All I can determine about the road is that plans for it are completely up in the air unless this minister's department reports and gives some indication as to where the road should go. If the minister would assure me that he will send me the information

[Mr. Fisher.]

relating to his department's activities in connection with this project so that I can turn to the minister of northern affairs and say, "Look, take the dotted lines off" or "Let us put this away in the sack for four or five years", I would appreciate it very much. I am quite willing to forget about the matter now if the minister will give me the assurance that he will provide information as to what his department is actually doing. I know the minister appreciates the fact that, when it comes to projects for the future, people can get very woolly. I should like to have something to tell the people in my area about this great dream.

Mr. Comtois: I must repeat that my department gives advice to the department of northern affairs. They may or may not accept our recommendation. They may make use of it. But we have no other authority than that. I can assure the hon. member that I will do my best to give him the information he requires and whatever further details are available. Also, we will communicate with the other department.

Item agreed to.

Mines branch—

220. Administration, operation and maintenance, \$4,480,543.

Mr. Best: Mr. Chairman, I would like to make some brief remarks on item 220, which covers an amount of some \$4½ million for administration, operation and maintenance of the mines branch of the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys.

I want to confine my remarks solely to studies carried on at present in the department and in its mines branch on uranium, uranium ores, extractive methods applied to such ores and new studies now going on into the problem of alternative uses of uranium in Canada.

We all know the problems faced by our uranium mines and their workers in this regard. As the demand for this mineral for defence purposes has diminished it has become increasingly important to search for other uses for uranium. Its use in nuclear power reactors for electricity production is now beginning in Canada, but some years will pass before large quantities are utilized here. In the annual report of the department for the calendar year 1958 we note that on page 62, under the heading "Radioactivity", there are references to problems in uranium ore treatment. In the 1959 annual report of the department, on pages 42 and 43, there are considerably more extensive references to uranium, but still largely confined to the treatment of ores in co-operation with private mining companies.