

Supply—Mines and Technical Surveys

are close to it and whose judgment I respect tell me that this may be the cheapest and most efficient source of power that has yet been developed by man. It certainly is a matter that deserves all of the attention of the government. Even if in the end we find that it does not work, a few hundred thousand dollars or a few million dollars spent on this project, having regard to the possibilities of it and what can be derived from it, should not matter too much. The possibilities are such that there should be no hesitation whatsoever. I urge the minister to give this matter most careful consideration. In the general estimates I hope there will be a much larger item.

Mr. Johnston (Bow River): The hon. member for Digby-Annapolis-Kings implied that I was opposing the amount of this estimate. I never did any such thing, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Nowlan: That is what I understood.

Mr. Johnston (Bow River): No, not at all. The only thing I want to be sure of is that we are getting something for our money and that we are not going to have to wait for the rest of our natural lives before some progress is being shown. Our coal mines are in a desperate position. We cannot wait for 10 years, 15 years or 20 years for this development to show some signs of progress. The hon. member is a great deal more hopeful than I am if he thinks—as was indicated by the hon. member for Cape Breton South—that the C.N.R. or the C.P.R. are going to dieselize all their locomotives and then are going to turn right around and equip them with this gas turbine. They just do not do that sort of thing. Before the railways go back to this type of gas engine, 25 years or 30 years will have passed. What I should like to see is a little bit more energy put on this development. Even if we have to double the appropriation this year, I would not be against it. But we want to at least see a little bit of energy put into it so we may see some tangible results in the very near future.

Item agreed to.

General—

590. Payments to Royal Canadian Air Force and commercial companies for air photography, and to defray the expenses of and the purchase of equipment by the interdepartmental committee on air surveys—further amount required, \$1,200,000.

Mr. Dinsdale: I have several questions on this item. I notice that the amount is almost the same as the original estimate for this work. That suggests to me either that there was poor estimating or that considerable new work has been undertaken. Second, I notice that the work of aerial surveying is being

divided between the Royal Canadian Air Force and commercial companies. Can the minister tell the committee just how the amount is divided between these two groups? Can he also give us the name of the commercial company engaged in the aerial surveying? This is an item of \$1,200,000, and it would suggest that a large amount of additional aerial survey work is involved. Can the minister tell us the nature of the work and if this amount is sufficient to complete it?

Mr. Harris: As I think hon. members know, we have been carrying out a program of aerial photography in Canada, and estimates are made in advance of the amount of work expected to be done during the coming flying season. Last year happened to be a particularly good year in some parts and not so good in others. The contract for the photography was carried out not entirely to the extent that had been expected. In addition to that aerial photography, however, the people concerned were able to take photographs not of the area that had been set out but of other areas, and when they completed their work the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys realized that the photography that was being offered at that moment was of an area which they would have on their program in a few years and they might as well acquire it now. That accounts for the fact that they purchased this additional amount of aerial photography during 1954-55.

It may look a little odd that the amount is as much again as the original item, but when it came before us we concluded that it was a sound investment as it merely involved doing twice as much work in the one year as had been expected. The advantage I see to it at the moment is that we are able to purchase it at about a 10 per cent discount under the circumstances.

Mr. Dinsdale: Can the minister tell me the name of the commercial company engaged?

Mr. Harris: I am sorry, I cannot.

Mr. Dinsdale: I suppose it is Spartan.

Mr. Harris: I think so.

Mr. Green: Can the minister tell us the policy of the government with regard to dividing this work between the Royal Canadian Air Force and the private companies? There has been considerable complaint that the government is not using private companies for work of this kind to the extent they could be used, and as a result the development of flying in Canada is being retarded, particularly in the northern parts of the country. I raised this matter last year