

Government Orders

es at that corporation and the directives given to it by the minister responsible.

I hope the Phalen mine will be up and running as soon as humanly possible, and I am sure the minister opposite would concur, but it had better be safe. Every expert, Labour Canada, CANMET and energy mines and resources, better spell out very clearly that it is safe. I will join with union representatives and their safety co-ordinator in saying that the men should not return to work if it is not proven conclusively that the mine is safe for miners to mine coal.

As we stand here today and debate the death of Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation, these people are worried about Christmas. They are worried about the new year. They are worried about getting back to work. I just want to put on record that I defy anyone in this Chamber to suggest or imply that those individuals associated and working at the Cape Breton Development Corporation are not industrious, hard working, determined men who wish to get back to work. There will be some who will try to paint the picture that all they want is unemployment insurance, a few benefits and that will be sufficient. That is not the case. Let no man or woman in this Chamber or outside this Chamber try to inflict that kind of gossip, that kind of big lie about the Cape Breton labour force. It is a very good labour force as studies have shown and as studies will indicate again and again.

• (1250)

These miners are worried about their lives and their families. They really are a special breed of people. They get up every morning, put their clothes on, go to the mine, get their lights and get on a little train. They are cramped in. They go down in the mine way underneath the ocean. They work, they get their pay and they come up. It is pretty scary for those individuals who do it, scary for their families, and particularly very scary for the children of miners.

I have made demands of the minister responsible in terms of unemployment insurance. I want to say on the record that I think the minister has attempted in good faith to be of some assistance. I want to thank him for that.

I have also urged the minister in a letter I have written to him that we have to do something for those miners who have been displaced at the Lingan colliery. We cannot just throw them adrift as if they are useless human beings. We need a package for those individuals. Some of them are not so old; some of them are a bit older. We need interim measures to provide assistance to those miners who are not without work and who have no idea as to when they will be able to return to full-time employment in the mines.

There is something else that the minister has not been overly positive about or co-operative about. That is the opening of the Donkin coal mine. At the present time at Devco in the coal division we have the Princess mine and the Phalen mine. Lingan looks like it is going to be closed. I hope not but it looks very much that way.

We have both domestic and international markets that must be supplied with coal. It only seems sensible, wise and prudent the Government of Canada, after spending in excess of \$55 million on the Donkin mine project, will get it up, get it ready and proceed with economic development there too.

As much as I would like to vent my anger at the minister responsible for the Cape Breton Development Corporation, I have to say in all candour that the minister does not enjoy the support of the Government of Nova Scotia. The Government of Canada could proceed unilaterally but that is not the best way to proceed. It has to proceed with the co-operation and the financial support of the Government of Nova Scotia. That crowd in Nova Scotia led by the premier, Mr. Donald Cameron, is an absolute, unbelievable bunch of incompetent individuals.

They care that much for the coal industry, that much for the people of Cape Breton and that much for the miners who work in the coal industry, as evidenced by statements made by the premier, by his refusal to retract those statements, by his attitude and by his wanton disregard for the people of Cape Breton.

The Cape Breton Development Corporation was brought in under a federal statute by the Hon. Allan J. MacEachen who sits in the other House. The minister will know that it was supported at that time by the premier of the day, Robert Lorne Stanfield. It was thereafter supported throughout the years by the successor to Mr. Stanfield, Mr. Regan, who served as premier