

*Supply—Regional Development*

it is quite clear that they are being dealt with inequitably. The Donald report, as has been pointed out, recommended that if early retirement were introduced it should be voluntarily entered upon. The Devco report states quite categorically that retirement at age 60 will be mandatory. The railway workers in particular are going to suffer a real loss of income if they are forced to retire at the age of 60 rather than 65. According to the figures I have, the legislation provides them with about \$3,000 per year. This means they will lose about \$15,000 for the five-year period, or about \$3,000 a year, because their average wage is approximately \$6,000 per year. I ask the minister whether it is equitable to force a man to retire under these circumstances. If retirement is going to be made mandatory, I suggest that instead of the \$3,000 that these men would receive annually under the legislation they should receive what their average income would amount to over the five-year period in which they are no longer permitted to work. This relates, of course, to the point that I was making, namely, that it seems to me that the groups most specifically and directly involved in this region have not played the full role they should have had in developing a plan themselves.

I missed the earlier remarks of the hon. member who preceded me and he might well have raised this question, but in case he did not I should like to ascertain from the minister when it is contemplated that the pre-retirement plan will come into effect. Further, would he assure this committee that those who are directly affected, and more particularly the railway workers, will have the chance to make representations and criticisms respecting the retirement plan either to the minister or to Devco?

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I have a particular question that I should like the minister to comment on if he has the information available. We all know that before the steel company at Sydney became a crown corporation it was losing money. However, we are now informed that over the past year it has likely made a profit of some \$2.5 million. My question, which is a factual one, is, why is this the case? Does the minister have any statistical evidence that he could present to the House to indicate why the corporation, when it was privately owned and greatly subsidized by the people of Canada for a number of years, lost money and then all of a sudden when it becomes a public corporation it

makes a profit? I should like to know whether this is really a case of the people of Canada subsidizing the profit made by a group of private individuals or whether there is a more acceptable reason to explain the profits that apparently are now going to be made by the company, profits which a few years ago would not have been made. With that point, Mr. Chairman, I shall conclude my remarks.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Dumont:** Mr. Chairman, if we analyse the report submitted by the Cape Breton Development Corporation, we realize that when the state takes a hand—and we now have the Minister of Forestry and Rural Development (Mr. Marchand) to help it in other similar undertakings—in the development of Canada, it is nothing but administration, bureaucracy, when for 35 years on this side of the house we have been asking for the perfect solution.

In fact, I have never been able to understand that it is possible to set the value of a dollar earned by an engineer or a carpenter in any way except by the number of hours needed to prepare plans or to extract ore from our mines rich in resources. I find it hard to understand that we have to say: The dollar is worth less than the products taken out of the mines.

If, in the past, those Cape Breton mines were so rich and if it is expected that within a few years coal will no longer be needed, because of the large supply of atomic energy, we will then have to use something other than coal for heating. If the previous governments had set the value of the dollar according to the value of the product, the value of the production of those mines, it would not be necessary today to talk about such regional development corporations. That situation shows that in Canada, as in all the other countries of the world at the present time, there is something wrong with the economy.

France is now facing a serious economic problem. It must keep a constant eye on the value of the franc, which is subject to fluctuation every day.

The same thing happens here, as in every country in the world. It would be unthinkable that an engineer or a carpenter should decide one morning that a 12-inch rule measures 11 inches only and, a week later, that it measures 13 inches. If the value of the dollar were regulated according to the value of the product, which would be possible in an economy which, in 1968, gives promise of