

matter is actively engaging the attention of the government and we are prepared to take such necessary steps as will make radium available to the sufferers in Canada at the lowest possible price.

Mr. IRVINE: Mr. Chairman, the statement of the minister as to how these people became possessors of resources which were properly held by the crown is the ordinary orthodox statement. Surely the minister will agree that if no definite action is taken now, pretty soon all these resources will be taken up by individuals in precisely the same way as these people to whom he has referred have obtained their rights; and before very long there will not be any natural resources left in the name of the crown. Of course this is not to be laid at the door of the minister, but the responsibility is upon him to take a new step away from that course which in the past has not been for the benefit of the people of Canada. I think the recent statement of the Prime Minister is the most important that has ever come from the treasury benches, and his remarks apply just as much to the resources now under discussion as they do to air and other resources. Unless the minister definitely says that the time has come for us to stop the exploitation of these resources for private profit, it may go on forever. The government should declare that all the resources in the area under discussion shall be regarded as being for the general advantage of Canada. Some of the unemployed should be put to work immediately to examine the whole field and estimate its value. If it should be found that there is value, either in radium or other minerals, then the government should finance the development by creating sufficient money to do so, thus absorbing a great proportion of our unemployed and at the same time garnering the wealth which might be applied to the paying of our national debt. The government's course is clear, and I should like to ask the minister if he will not go so far as to assure the committee that the government will not extend the time limit to those prospectors and others who have obtained leases or rights in respect of mineral resources in the Great Bear lake district. Will the minister give the undertaking that no further extension of time will be given to those who have filed claims?

Mr. MURPHY: I am not in position to give a categorical answer to the question asked by the hon. member, because the action of the government would be predicated to a great extent upon conditions. The hon. member has

asked me to state that no further extension of time will be granted to those who are now in possession of mineral claims, but I am not in a position to give that assurance. However, I am willing to give this matter every consideration. I assure the committee that I have no desire to act in a manner other than that which will be for the benefit of all the people of Canada. The prospector who may have spent many years of his life, perhaps all of his life in discovering and prospecting these areas should not be cut off from the fruits of his labours because of any drastic action on the part of the government.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: It seems to me most regrettable that the minister should take the attitude he has just taken. Apparently in his eyes the prospector fills the whole horizon, and it makes very little difference—

Mr. MURPHY: I did not make any such statement as that.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I did not suggest the minister had made the statement; I said it was apparent to the rest of us that in the eyes of the minister the claims of the prospector were of paramount importance. The minister began by pointing out that the mines had been discovered by private prospectors and were now in private hands, and these facts were set up as serious objections to our taking any action. I think we all recognize that the prospector has certain claims, and every one of us would be glad to see that his rights are safeguarded. But in practically all mining areas it is not the prospector who makes the fortunes out of the mines; almost invariably it is the promotor. Generally the prospector has not the capital with which to develop the mine; he has to sell out, sometimes for a mere pittance, to the promotor who goes in and reaps the profits. It is not going to be different in a case of this kind. We are all willing to grant sufficient to remunerate the prospector, but it becomes evident that there are other claims than his. Let me give one illustration. Some hon. members may remember a few years ago the claims made by certain individuals who in the early days, had gone into Churchill, put up with all sorts of hardship, and laid claim to lands that later on were to become the site of the present harbour and town of Churchill. It seemed then that there were certain claims that ought not lightly to be set aside; yet it was recognized that larger claims had precedence. Because certain people had taken up homesteads there in the early days, that did