

*Supply—Mines and Technical Surveys*

this is a clean-up item of this year's commitments to McGill University. If he will vote it now, subject to what he has said, he may have a discussion of it with the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys on the estimates for the forthcoming year.

**Mr. Johnston (Bow River):** I hope the minister will bring this matter to the attention of the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys.

**Mr. Harris:** I will.

**Mr. Johnston (Bow River):** If he can persuade him to give us an answer, I will certainly pass this item now.

**Mr. Nowlan:** Can the minister tell us when this project started and what is the total expenditure on it to date?

**Mr. Harris:** The expenditure to date has been \$433,786 and, with this supplementary item, it becomes \$483,786.

**Mr. Nowlan:** Mr. Chairman, when did the project start? Has the minister the date of that, roughly? We have voted \$100,000 already this year for this item, and this is a second item of \$50,000.

**Mr. Harris:** I think this is the fourth year.

**Mr. Nowlan:** Yes; I think it is the fourth year in which this matter has been before the house.

**Mr. Harris:** I think so.

**Mr. Nowlan:** I do not want to set myself up as an expert. We all recognize the knowledge possessed by the hon. member for Cape Breton South with respect to the coal industry and coal mines generally. Far be it from me to question his judgment. However, I suggest that possibly this is an engineering problem about which neither one of us knows a great deal and that we ought to try to get advice from other people with regard to it. I have talked to engineers and to men who are close to the coal industry, and they are people whom the hon. member for Cape Breton South knows very well. I think he would accept their word and their judgment. They have an entirely different viewpoint on this particular project than that which was advanced by the hon. member for Cape Breton South and, I think inferentially, by the hon. member for Bow River. Frankly, I am a little bit surprised by the attitude taken by the hon. members. Of course if their premises are correct, they are justified. But apparently there is a big difference of opinion on the matter.

My complaint is not that you have a \$50,000 item in your estimates. My complaint is that you have not enough. I think that

[Mr. Harris.]

this matter should have been proceeded with with more vigour and that more money should have been spent on it. Then we would not be debating needlessly tonight whether it is a good thing or bad thing, or whether it is going to be a good thing five years or ten years from now. If this were a national defence project, Mr. Chairman, and if it were a matter of developing a turbine engine for an airplane during the war, as was done with the jets, you would put the whole resources of the nation behind that project. You brought in scientists from wherever you could find them, you locked them up and told them to come out with a solution; and they did so, time and time again.

As I think the hon. member for Cape Breton South will admit, this project may be of equal importance to the coal industry. The coal industry's life is measured today not in decades but in years and almost, one might say, in months. I think that the government should place on this project greater emphasis than has been placed upon it heretofore. I am not criticizing them for what has been done. I know what they have been told undoubtedly. I have been told this by those fairly close to the matter. The government have been told, "We are getting enough money; we are proceeding along and we are making progress". The men back of this project, the scientists working on it, deserve credit. I think they have really accomplished a great deal. However, they are proceeding in a laboratory atmosphere. They are proceeding in an effort to achieve technical perfection. I do not think they have quite the sense of urgency that the occasion demands. Instead of thanking the government for the amount of money they have received, I think they should be demanding twice as much; and I believe the government would meet their request.

My hon. friend says that this engine could never haul a locomotive. I am told that the British have developed an engine similar to this one, or rather a turbine, and that they are hauling trains in Great Britain with it at the moment. I am also told that they have been trying to license it to two American railways and that both American railways have said, "We are interested in the McGill project; we think it is a better machine and we are not going to license yours, although it is made in Britain where ordinarily engineering standards are very high. We are going to wait for the McGill project to be finished." That is the interest that at least some people in the United States are taking in this project.

My friend says that it cannot haul a train. It certainly can develop power. Those who