

*Supply—Mines and Technical Surveys*

serious situation affecting the coal mines in Nova Scotia. I think all of us support the vote that is being requested, and if there is criticism of the vote it will be that the amount is not adequate to deal with the conditions in that area.

In outlining in a very detailed way the purposes of the vote and the conditions in coal mines generally across the country, I think the minister held out very little hope for the future of the coal mining industry or coal miners themselves. When you take the minister's statement of this evening in conjunction with earlier announcements, it appears to me that the government, far from evolving a long term coal policy that would maintain the production of the coal industry in an efficient manner, is damning and condemning this industry to complete disaster and a final and complete shutting down. I do not think there is any other interpretation that hon. members can place upon the remarks made by the minister.

The minister says the government is working on a long term program; that the government is working on long term solutions; but as the government works on these so-called long term solutions it is allowing one mine after another to be closed down, the industry wrapped up and in very large part terminated.

I think it is difficult for anyone to argue in favour of maintaining an industry that is uneconomic and inefficient; but even if one should put this industry in that category I think there are particular reasons why the suffering that comes from a further shut-down in the mines should not be allowed.

I can see no economic advantage to the nation in closing down the Caledonia mine, putting the miners on relief and allowing suffering among the unemployed. The only way you can deal with the coal mining situation in a fair and equitable manner is in a full employment economy, and as long as there is widespread unemployment in the maritime provinces, and in Nova Scotia in particular, all the government's policy does is compound the misery that now exists.

As strongly as I can I want to tell the government that its policy is a failure as far as Nova Scotia is concerned. It is a failure as far as parliament is concerned. It is an admission of failure to keep on postponing this so-called long term policy while step by step the government allows the mines to be shut down, the industry wrapped up and the unemployed coal miners to suffer.

Many studies have been made of the coal mining industry in the past; many reports have been brought forward. One would expect

[Mr. Argue.]

that the government would take the information contained in these reports, come to some conclusions, announce a policy and go forward with that policy.

I tried on an earlier occasion this session by way of a motion to have the Vissac report made available to the house. This, the government refused to do. It buried the report. It concealed another report. It made this a secret document on the grounds that it was interdepartmental or had been prepared by a member of the coal board. I should like to know from the minister if he will tell me some of the recommendations contained in the Vissac report and why the government has felt it wise to cover up or conceal the recommendations which it contained. I understand that while that report has not been disclosed in the House of Commons, in the areas affected it has been in circulation and is relatively well known at least to some people who are closely connected with the industry.

I have in my hand a report of the royal commission on coal, 1959, and I could deal with it in various stages. I have been informed that this is the Vissac report. Looking through it I see nothing which would warrant the government concealing it. I cannot myself vouch that it is the Vissac report, but someone sent it to me through the mail and said that is what it is. The minister can deny, if he likes, that it is the report. There are some important recommendations in this document. The authors say that deep shafts must be put down near the water's edge if the mines are to be efficient. This, they say, is the way to cut down costs in the industry and enable it to carry on efficiently.

The proposals are contained in part 3 and they appear on page 27 of this document. The first item is headed "Subventions". This, I imagine, would give the minister sufficient information for him to be able to confirm or deny, if he wishes to do so, that this is the Vissac report. I think a report of this kind should be made available to all members of the house when the coal industry is being considered. I think we should be in possession of all the information that is available. I see nothing here which would suggest to me that the government is warranted in having concealed this document. My motion having been turned down in the House of Commons I am pleased that someone—I do not know who—should have put this in the mail and sent it to me with a note saying, this is the Vissac report.

**Mr. MacInnis:** Would the hon. member permit me to ask him a question? In reviewing the so-called Vissac report has he found in it any solution to the problem faced by the Nova Scotia miners?