

Industrial Activity in Maritimes

• (9:50 p.m.)

hon. members for Cape Breton North and Victoria (Mr. Muir) and Cape Breton South (Mr. MacInnis). I should like to deal mainly with this question of the removal of the equipment from the wire and nail mill at the Sydney steel plant. The reason I mention this situation is that something along this line took place in the constituency which I represent some time ago. I am referring to the time when the nut and bolt department was removed from the Trenton plant to Montreal. This caused a lot of unemployment in the area. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to guess what party formed the government at that time? Naturally it was the Liberal party. This nut and bolt department was moved. There were a lot of promises made and I believe an inquiry was conducted, but the department was still moved to Montreal.

May I point out that during the time our party formed the government of this country, from 1957 to 1963, there was a move made from Montreal to Nova Scotia. I refer to the closing of the Canada Car plant which did make rolling stock in Montreal. This plant was closed in Montreal and the equipment moved to our area. This just illustrates the difference between what was done by our party and what is done by another party. This move meant a great deal of work for the people of our area. I believe at least 100 people were employed. I recall that at the time there was a great deal of pressure on the government to return the Canada Car plant, but we did not succumb to that pressure. As I say, it has done a lot for our area.

I should like to refer also to the \$25 million. I do not know whether the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. MacEachen) has it, or the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys (Mr. Pepin). However, I am sure the Minister of National Health and Welfare recalls that story about the great Cape Breton magistrate, A. B. McGillivray who had a Cape Breton coal miner before him charged with intoxication. I do not know how that would ever happen in Cape Breton. However, the magistrate fined him \$10 and costs. The fellow put his hand in his back pocket and said, "Well, A.B., I have the \$10 in my back pocket." The magistrate said, "Ten days in the Cape Breton county jail; have you got that in your back pocket?" I ask the Minister of National Health and Welfare, where is that \$25 million?

Mr. Pickersgill: In his back pocket.

Mr. MacEwan: If he has it, he has not done very much with it. I think perhaps the Minister of Transport has taken some of it to Newfoundland with the able assistance of the Premier of that province. I might say that we want to see a little bit of this cash and we want to see it soon. I just want to endorse what was said by my two hon. friends; I think definitely that there should be a movement in this direction.

I think the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys is very anxious to get to Nova Scotia to meet with the various groups and, barring another crisis, as the Minister of National Health and Welfare said, surely they will be down there soon so that a decision will be made at a very early time.

I now want to say something that I have said in this house before. I hope that the Minister of National Health and Welfare will be able to hold his own in the cabinet. In former cabinets we know that our Nova Scotian minister, the late Mr. Nowlan, the former hon. member for Digby-Annapolis-Kings often told me that he and the Minister of Finance were often held to the true course. He had difficulty in matters affecting our province, but he seemed to be able to come through. I would hope, with the other members here, that our sentiment in this regard will be made plain by the Minister of National Health and Welfare or by the Minister of Industry.

What should be borne in mind are the exact effects of the movement of the equipment from Sydney to Etobicoke, and also the details of the \$25 million grant, which was a commitment during the last election campaign by the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

I think it is about time we had the facts on these matters. Questions in this house have been asked many times with regard to them, and I hope that something may be done in that regard.

Finally, sir, there is one thing which many of us who have shipbuilding yards in our areas are wondering about. As I understand it, very little ship refitting and naval refitting is coming to the two yards in Cape Breton. I know in my own area there has not been a sizeable naval refit for a long time.

Mr. Forrestall: Nor in Halifax.

Mr. MacEwan: The junior member for Halifax says, nor in Halifax. That is so.