

*Natural Resources—Development*

After that was done it was a question of markets. It was said there were not sufficient markets. Something has been done about markets. As far as the operating company is concerned, my opinion is that over the last year they could not supply the market that was available to them within somewhere about a million tons of coal. So the question of markets is not there. It is nearly time somebody began to find out who is fooling whom as far as that industry is concerned. The federal government has a stake in it by way of subventions and so on. In fact they have kept it breathing over the last number of years.

I look at the newspapers and I pick up clipping after clipping just since we came back to this house. The town of Westville is becoming another ghost town. The mine is closed. Coal mining in that area of Pictou county has been wiped out. There just is not any more. Something will have to be done for that particular community.

As I said before, these leases are farmed out by the provincial governments to big companies. When one big company dominates the life of any town or city in which it operates, you are in trouble. All they have to do to keep you in line is to say, "We will close up." They are using that threat at every opportunity.

I have received a resolution from the people of Westville saying that the lease of the company in that area should be broken so some other operator might be given a chance to come in there. Then you pick up press clippings—you can get them by the dozen, and I do not want to bother the house by reading them—saying that coal dealers complain supplies are not available right in that area. Local, domestic coal cannot be supplied. Press clippings indicate that there is difficulty in getting coal right in the area represented by the hon. member for Digby-Annapolis-Kings, an area in which coal is produced and where they are closing the mine, holding leases and preventing any other operator from operating the mines.

I hope when this national energy board is set up it will have competent personnel who can look into that particular angle of the matter. They could ascertain whether or not the people who are managing the industry are managing it in the best interests of the people who have to make a living there and in the best interests of the community, and whether or not the industry is pulling its economic weight in the whole national picture. The members of the board should be able to sit down and iron out the kinks that exist in the fuel industry, because that industry has to measure up to and meet the

competition that comes from Alberta oil. It is not in a position to do that today.

The Gordon commission's report recommended that the whole question of subventions should be investigated. They suggest that the subventions now paid for the movement of coal into Ontario and Quebec should be revamped so they would apply to coal that is marketed in the Atlantic area. Well, water-borne coal is now receiving a subvention of around 88 cents a ton moving from Atlantic ports into Montreal. I leave that thought with the minister. I am not going to argue about it, because if press reports are correct this company cannot supply the coal markets it has at the present time. If that is true, then the answer would not seem to be in subventions, the answer would seem to be in production. Of course production is the company's responsibility. Whether or not they are going at the thing in a way that will get that production is not for me to say; that is for the mine workers to say.

I might point out to the house that the mine workers employed by Dosco are patient and long suffering. They have not had a wage increase in the past three years, yet the wages in practically every other industry in this country have been going up and up. They see the steel plant alongside of them with 4,500 men working for the same company, and their wages have gone up over the years as well as increases in fringe benefits. The mine workers have had no improvement in their wages or their fringe benefits. Negotiations are under way now with the mine workers. A second conciliation board is trying to iron out the difficulty. Judging from all the conflicting reports one sees I am rather doubtful whether anything is going to come out of it. I feel the federal government has some responsibility in the matter because of the enormous amount of money they put into the industry by way of subsidies and subventions.

I hope when this national energy board is set up, and I believe it will be set up, it will have some authority to speak to the provincial people about the management of the resources that belong to the people of that province. Most people seem to forget that when a company takes a lease on resources in any part of the country the company has a right to do what it likes with those resources. However, those resources still belong to the people, and the particular provincial government farming out those resources is the custodian of them and is answerable to the people for the way in which the resources are exploited. In Nova Scotia they are not doing a very good job of exploiting coal.

Now, with respect to this question concerning the formation of big companies—this is