

Supply—Mines and Technical Surveys

Mr. Walker: I am seeking clarification of the ruling that was made.

Mr. Tardif: Oh, oh.

Mr. Walker: We now hear from the hon. member in the back seat. What has the hon. member to say?

Mr. Tardif: Mr. Chairman, I have been invited to speak by the Minister of Public Works—

The Chairman: Order.

Mr. Walker: Mr. Chairman, I am seeking clarification of your ruling. Do I understand that the hon. member for Port Arthur will be allowed latitude in dealing with a subject which has nothing to do with coal and which is not relevant to the estimates now being considered in committee?

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, I believe it is a well known rule of this house that it is incompetent for any hon. member to put questions to the Chair. I suggest that Your Honour made a ruling that was understood by those who are intelligent enough to understand, and if the hon. member for Rosedale was not able to understand it perhaps he should read it in *Hansard* tomorrow.

Mr. Hellyer: If the minister can find time to take some reading lessons overnight.

The Chairman: Order. I do not think it is necessary for me to say that the rule applying in committee is that debate must be strictly relevant. On the other hand, I think it must be applied according to the prevailing circumstances in order to be fair.

I indicated in what way I hoped the hon. member for Port Arthur would continue, for a while, his remarks on the subject dealt with by the hon. member for Bow River, and I indicated my reservation that he would be permitted to continue subject to the intervention of the Chair if I think he is going too far afield. I trust that after the hon. member has replied to the hon. member for Bow River the committee will be satisfied that this matter has been disposed of and that the whole committee will come back to the discussion of the item dealing with coal.

Mr. Fisher: Mr. Chairman, it never pays for any of us as individuals in politics to be too sensitive. I do not take objection to being accused of mudslinging by the Minister of Public Works. The purport of my remarks was that the hon. member for Bow River, in relation to the subject of coal, introduced some interpretations about the political morality—we will forget about individuals—of political parties. I felt it was incumbent upon me to rise and say that whether we are talking

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

about Northern Ontario Natural Gas, highways or Eastview, we can produce lots of scandals and innuendos relating to the political party to which the hon. member belongs.

I do not intend to carry on in that vein, but merely wish to point out to the hon. gentleman that when one ox is being gored it is all right, but when another ox is being gored it is rotten. I think we should all consider that in the whole incident there should have been more fair play than was extended by the hon. member for Bow River.

My remarks on coal board affairs are going to be very brief. I wanted to say to the hon. member for Cape Breton South that I appreciated receiving word from him some months ago that he would like hon. members to use their influence with Ontario hydro in order to see that the thermo plants used Cape Breton coal. I recall that on a previous occasion he insinuated that the Ontario members had not done anything about this matter, or had not replied. I wanted to put on record the fact that I had spoken to several people in hydro, that I had sent a letter to one of the people at the top of hydro in relation to this matter, and that I am extremely pleased that Ontario hydro has given an order for Nova Scotia coal.

I regret that it may be too late or that it may not be big enough to be as significant as it should, however, it certainly seems to me that this is one way in which a provincial institution or corporation can be a big help in a national way. It is all very well for Mr. Macaulay and other people who are experts on energy in Ontario to keep pointing out that Nova Scotia coal does not quite match United States coal not only in price but in certain constituent values. However, it seems to me that in the national interest we should be prepared to work with a product that may be somewhat lower in quality or higher in cost if it really means the lifeblood of an area that buys a great deal from Ontario.

I do not know what role the federal government or the minister's department or the coal board can play in this matter. I imagine it is really one of negotiating and bargaining. However, as far as the hon. member for Cape Breton South is concerned, whatever one may feel about certain statements he has made I will congratulate him on his efforts in trying to get Ontario hydro aware of the fact that Nova Scotia has a coal problem which we can help to solve.

Mr. MacEwan: I shall be brief in this matter. I wish to make a few remarks on the estimates of the dominion coal board. Last night the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate made certain remarks on which I should like to comment briefly. First of all,