

Kirkland Lake M. P. Defends Mining Industry, Managers At Ottawa

Following is the third instalment covering the recent debate in the House of Commons on the Government's subsidy on gold. Principal speaker criticising the industry has been Clarence Gillis, CCF member for Cape Breton.

Mr. J. M. MACDONNELL (Muskoka, Ontario): Mr. Speaker, I wish to say just a word. I am stimulated to rise partly by what was said by the hon. member for Cape Breton South (Mr. Gillis) and partly by what has been said by the hon. member for

York South (Mr. Colkeram). Mr. COLDWELL: Good stimulation. Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka, Ontario): My reason for rising is that the hon. member for Cape Breton South said it was a great pity that there were not enough speck men for the miners here. It happens that in a small way I can speak for one miner on this question. The reason I want to do it is that my good friend the hon. member for Cape Breton South undertook when he was speaking to make some pretty sweeping statements about employers.

I do not suggest that all employers are made in heaven, or that they are all going to heaven. I am not suggesting for one moment that they are always doing right. But I dislike hearing anyone say that employers have done everything to frustrate their employees.

Mr. GILLIS: No. Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka, Ontario): Those are your words. I took them down.

Mr. GILLIS: Mr. Speaker— Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka, Ontario): Let me make my speech. You can correct it later.

Mr. GILLIS: The hon. member is not quoting me accurately. I said the mining industry in northern Ontario did everything they could to frustrate their employees in securing collective bargaining.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka, Ontario): If you think that is a correction, all right. My little bit of experience—and it is small perhaps, but I suggest it is indicative of the situation—would show that the situation is not just exactly as our hon. friends would represent it.

Driving along the road not long ago, I happened to pick up a man, and it turned out that he was a miner. He began to talk to me about mining and, without any prompting from me at all, told me that in his mine they were very well treated indeed.

You will say, "Oh that is only one mine". You will say it is only one man I am not exaggerating this, nor am I asking anyone else to exaggerate it. I am just bringing this in because it goes to support what was said by the hon. member for York South.

I have just this to add. I object to people undertaking to say that those in certain occupations have less humanity than people in other occupations. They do not. I have had some little experience with labour. As a matter of fact my experience with labour was right down in Cape Breton South. I am bold enough to say that I and the people with whom I associated got along with labour very well, and it was not because we were different from other people. It was because we tried to be decent, and to tell them the truth. We tried to let them know about the business they were in, with the result we got 100 per cent support.

Then coming to these people in the north country may I say that I do not doubt there are some of the difficulties the hon. member for Cape Breton South mentioned. But I feel that we in the House of Commons should try to restrain ourselves from suggesting that somehow or another there are some people who are wicked and others who

are good, and that that is the reason we are in trouble. Mr. WALTER LITTLE (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, I feel that, coming from the north country, I should say a few words. I have lived in that north country for thirty-seven years; and when I say that I refer to the Kirkland Lake district. I know miners and I know mining just about as well as the hon. member for Cape Breton South (Mr. Gillis) does.

He has talked about men not wanting to work underground. I could tell him about a chap who worked in a mine right from grass roots until he was down 5,000 feet. The manager of that mine wanted the miner in question to come up to the surface and to work there for a while, but the miner did not want to come up. The manager insisted that it would do him good to get some sun for a while; and when the manager insisted too much the miner said, "Well I can go to another mine and get work underground". That is an indication of how much that fellow liked working underground. The miner about whom I am speaking still works at the same mine, although I suppose that today he is at least sixty-five years of age. He does not now work underground, but acts as night-watchman.

Then, the hon. member referred to McGuire. I know McGuire well. In company with another man he came into my office one day, and he told me in my office that he was a communist, and that he was not ashamed of it. I will go before any judge in the country or take an affidavit to that effect against Mr. McGuire, and also have the other man called, if that is necessary. There is no use in rising in the House of Commons and trying to protect these fellows when they say they are communists. Reid Robinson says he is not, so we cannot do anything about that. But when a man tells me frankly that he is a communist, then not much more can be said about him.

Mr. GILLIS: McGuire is not in this country now. Mr. LITTLE: I know he is not; and I wish Reid Robinson was not here either.

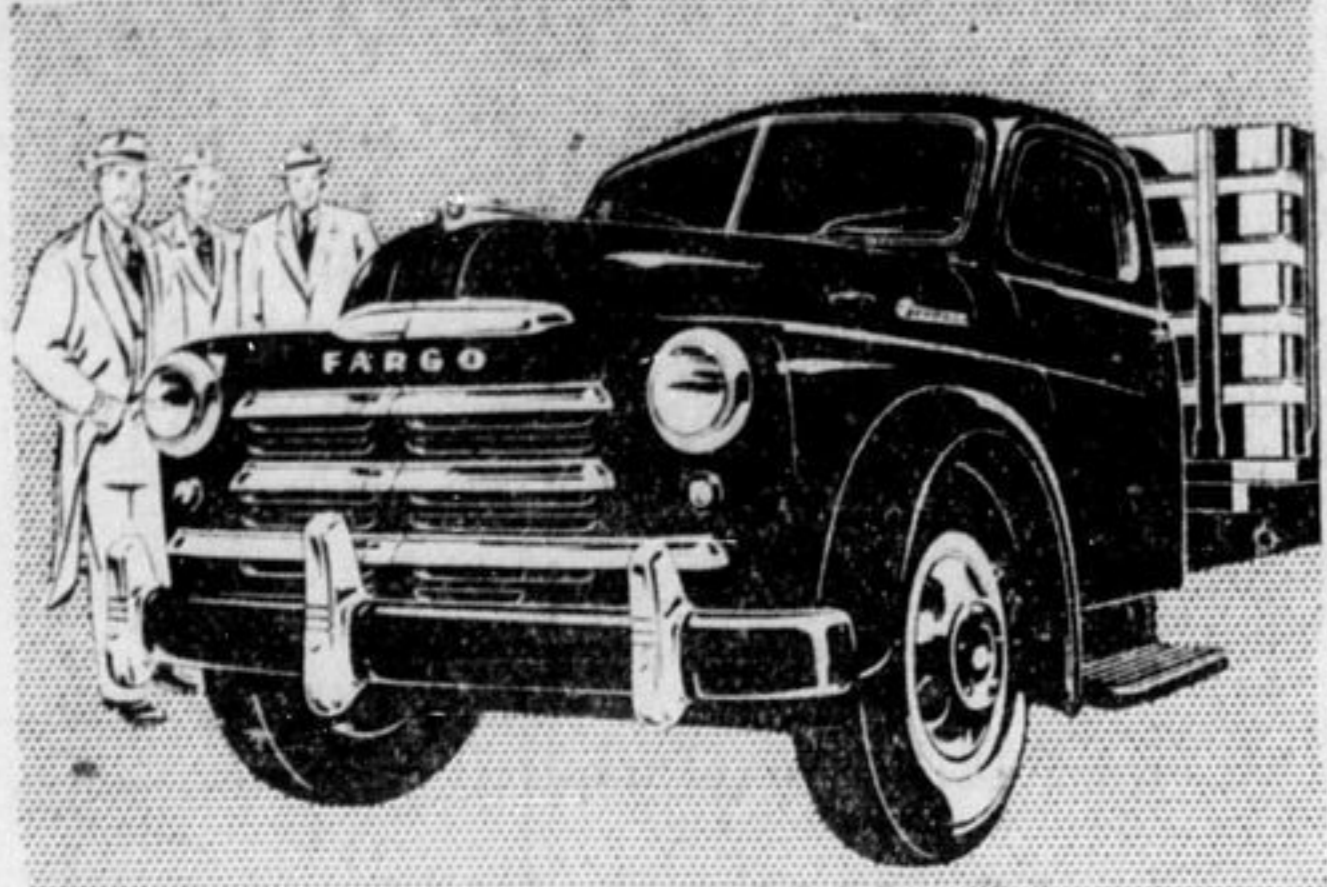
The hon. member has talked about mine managers. I have had business with mine managers for thirty-seven years. I hauled stuff into that country until such time as the railroad went in, and I had to deal with mine managers. I had to make many contracts and agreements with them. I never had a mine manager act in a mean way toward me, or in a way different from that in which other men would

have acted. They are businessmen, just the same as other men who are in business. They will try to get the best bargain they can; but I have always found them fair about it. I can tell the house that when war broke but prices increased to a great extent in that district, much higher than they are today. We were paying \$45 a ton for hay and \$5.25 a bag for western oats. I was receiving \$7 a day; I was paying my men \$4.50 and it cost me \$2.50 a day to feed my horses. I went to the mine managers and laid

my cards on the table. They said to me, "Say what you want and if it is fair we will give it to you." Surely that was fair enough. I do not like to hear men rise in the House of Commons and speak as the hon. member for Cape Breton South has done, and to talk as he has about mine managers. They are not angels, I know; but— Mr. GILLIS: I was not talking about mine managers. I was talking about operators. Mr. LITTLE: Operators then, if you

like. Mr. GILLIS: A mine manager is himself, an employer. Mr. LITTLE: He is an operator. Motion agreed to, Bill read the third time and passed.

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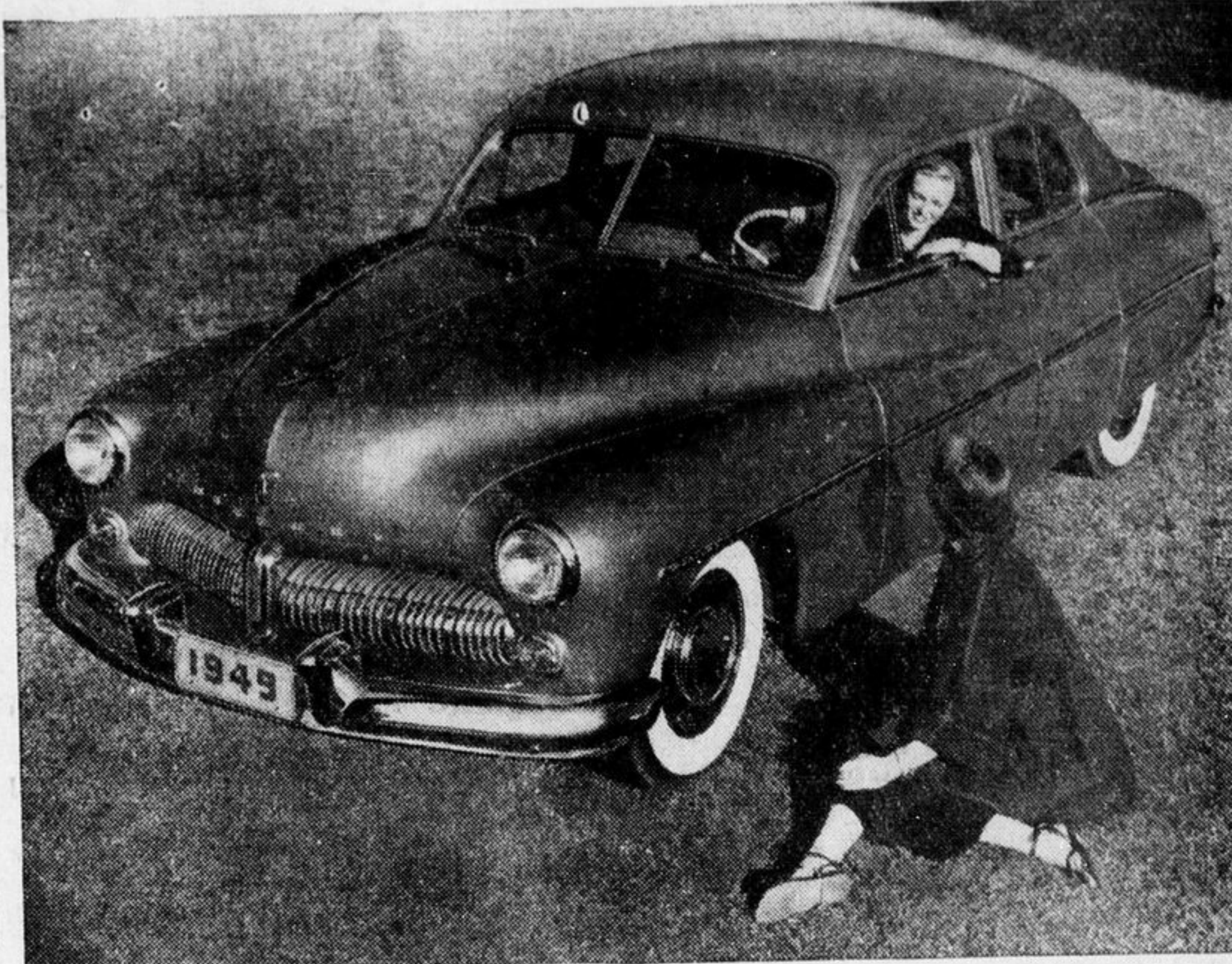
WHEREAS, the seriousness of the situation is aggravated by acute shortages of building materials and other goods essential to the restoration of our normal peacetime economy and

WHEREAS, a major percentage of all fires can be prevented by cleaning out rubbish and unnecessary combustible materials, and by correcting other obvious fire hazards

THEREFORE, I, Karl A. Eyre, Mayor of the Town of Timmins, do hereby designate the week of May 3rd to May 8 as FIRE PREVENTION CLEAN-UP WEEK, and most respectfully call upon all municipal departments, manufacturing and retail interests, civic clubs and women's associations, schools, churches, veteran's groups, youth organizations and our people in general to take a full and active part in this campaign to clean the home, the store and factory of all rubbish and unnecessary combustible accumulations, thus contributing toward the safer, more secure town which we as citizens so earnestly desire. In testimony whereof I hereby sign my name and Seal of Office this 3rd day of May 1948.

KARL A. EYRE, Mayor

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