

the control of the British Shipping Board. At the time they were taken over they were carrying something like four million tons up the St. Lawrence. I think the figures for 1913 or 1914 were in the neighbourhood of 4,300,000 tons. Now, when those ships were commandeered we could not ship coal to the St. Lawrence because we had no ships to transport it, and but for two things there would have been a considerable amount of unemployment in our province. The first thing that prevented it was the way in which the young men of Cape Breton enlisted. No sooner did the call come than they sprang to the sword in larger numbers, I believe, than was the case with the great majority of the counties of the Dominion. That relieved us of a great deal of unemployment. Secondly, a short time afterwards, on account of the location of our harbour, large fleets of ships came there, of from 9,000 to 20,000 tons, and were formed into convoys of thirty to forty ships and were convoyed across the ocean. These convoys left Sydney Harbour almost every week, and of course they consumed a large amount of coal for bunkering. These were the two chief factors which prevented a large amount of unemployment. We thought that as soon as the war was over the British Shipping Board would return to us all the shipping they had commandeered, but now we find—and I have made some examination of the matter—such cases as these. Seven of our coal boats which were commandeered are now on the ocean between the Old Country and Australia, either going for wheat or bringing back wheat. Now, that does not seem to me to be good shipping business while there is wheat in Canada and the United States, because you can make three trips between New York or Montreal and the Old Land to one between Australia and the Old Land.

Mr. M. CLARK: What do these ships take to Australia?

Mr. BUTTS: I really do not know, unless it is a general cargo of manufactured goods. They go from England, not from here. You will see at once, Mr. Speaker, the reason for it. Those ships were chartered in pre-war days by the Dominion Coal Company, the Dominion Iron and Steel Company, and the Nova Scotia Steel and Coal Company. In those pre-war days those boats, particularly the larger ones, could haul coal from Sydney to Montreal at sixty cents a ton. It is the opinion of shipping men in our province, and I think in Montreal, and

I know it is the accepted opinion of people who had these boats chartered, that when they were commandeered and taken overseas, influence was at once brought to bear by the shipping interests over there to have the British Shipping Board retain these ships, because after the boats were commandeered they were chartered at war rates. To such an extent was this attempted that the owners of two of those ships went into the courts in the Old Country to have their charters set aside altogether, contending that the war had voided their charter, and that they were now at liberty to charter at any price. The courts decided against them, and one of the boats against which a decision was given is now actually in a dry-dock in England for repairs that look very suspicious, in order to finish out the remainder of her charter term, and in the meantime enter into a war-price charter.

These are a few of the matters which I think should receive the serious consideration of the Government and especially of the Minister of Finance. Before the war we had the market in the St. Lawrence that I have already spoken of. We were selling over four million tons of coal. Then our shipping was commandeered, and to-day our market is lost to us, or practically so. Every port on the St. Lawrence has been filled with American coal, and just at this very time the Minister of Finance strikes off the seven and-a-half per cent duty on coal. We are not afraid of the seven and-a-half per cent duty by any means, because we think we can sell coal in the St. Lawrence at the figures at which we have sold it in the past.

If our shipping is not restored to us something must be done to enable us to burn our own coal at home. It has always been my dream that the day would come when Nova Scotia would not ship abroad a ton of coal but that we would burn it within our own borders. That time will come, I think. It may not be in the near future but it must come. Since 1902 we have had an increase in the number of coal mines in Cape Breton county until to-day there are about thirty-one. We have erected eight large blast furnaces. We have twenty-one open hearth furnaces and several hundred coke ovens of different types. At the steel works in Sydney alone they are burning 3,200 tons of coal a day and the consumption is gradually on the increase, and with the steel business in such a prosperous shape as it has been I hope to see the day when its expansion will have reached such