

Domestic Coal Supply

In my last review of the coal situation on May 24 I referred chiefly to the position with regard to the supply of coal for industrial use. I did advise the house briefly of the domestic position and stated that it might well be that the household consumer would have to reduce his fuel consumption in the coming winter.

Since that time the anthracite miners in the United States ceased work on May 30. While it has been reported that production will start in these mines on June 10, this stoppage of production has accentuated the short supply situation in domestic fuel and there may not be sufficient of this type of fuel to give every customer his full supply.

It has been the practice for many householders to order and accept delivery of their winter's requirements of coal during the summer months. It is evident that when the supply of preferred coals is short this practice will, unless controlled, lead to a situation where some householders have a full supply and others who, for one reason or another, cannot order their supply in the summer, will be unable to secure their fair proportion.

It has been decided, therefore, to put out an order restricting the delivery of coal for domestic or household consumption. Since the future supply position will remain uncertain for some time to come, it has been necessary to divide the season into two parts. The order provides that no dealer may deliver nor may any consumer accept before November 1, 1946, more than sixty per cent of his normal annual requirements of the preferred classes of coal otherwise defined as class A fuel. The consumer may, at his option, secure in this period an additional twenty per cent of his annual fuel requirements in the form of other coals. In other words, the consumer may, before November 1, order and store eighty per cent of his total annual needs, but only seventy-five per cent of the coal he secures in this period may be class A fuel, which corresponds to sixty per cent of his total annual needs of the preferred type of coal.

Before November 1 I shall be in a position to see what can be done to make up the balance required, and I would assure the house that every possible effort will be made to provide additional supplies before that date.

Measures have been taken to divert from the railways in western Canada a supply of low volatile briquettes which are acceptable as a replacement for the class A fuels, as defined in the order of last year and are included as a class A fuel in the new order. It is also expected that there will be a substantial increase in the output of these

[Mr. Howe.]

briquettes as soon as the necessary construction material can be secured. Steps are also being taken to increase the output of other western coals both to protect the consumers in western Canada and to provide some surplus for movement to Ontario. It must be realized, however, that the movement east of any large tonnage of coal will conflict with the movement of grain, and not only will it not be difficult to coordinate these two volume movements to secure the most efficient use of the available transportation, but there is also a definite limit to the tonnage which can be moved because of the limit set by the railway facilities available.

In conclusion, I would advise the house that the situation is grave and that unless there is some improvement in the near future it probably will be necessary to take other and more severe measures to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of the fuel that is available.

Mr. BLACK (Cumberland): Is the minister able to make a statement on the additional tonnage of coal from Nova Scotia that will be available in the ordinary course this season for shipment to central Canada?

Mr. HOWE: I shall be glad to make inquiries. The output of Nova Scotia coal has improved considerably. I shall require advice before I can answer the question.

Mr. LOCKHART: May I suggest to the minister that the instructions sent out make clear whether deliveries can be made concurrently of class C and class A fuel, or whether it is permissible to deliver them separately as the dealer may desire? There was considerable confusion over that last year.

Mr. FULTON: In view of the emergency outlined in the minister's statement, will the government consider granting an increase in the subsidy on coal to encourage production in small or marginal mines?

Mr. HOWE: The coal controller is constantly in touch with mines of the class mentioned, and is using his best discretion to do what is necessary in that regard.

RESEARCH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT OF VICE-PRESIDENTS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, ETC.

The house resumed from Monday, June 3, consideration of the motion of Mr. Howe for the second reading of bill No. 154, to amend the Research Council Act.

Hon. C. D. HOWE (Minister of Reconstruction and Supply): In the remarks made on the resolution which preceded the bill, I