

a little knowledge of one subject of fuel supply mentioned by the hon. member for Peterborough West, namely, alcohol. I would not be in a position to discuss how far we might rely upon that for the development of energy, other than human energy.

Mr. McMASTER: Only briefly.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The coal of the Dominion lies mainly in the extreme provinces. In the province represented in part by the hon. member for Cape Breton North and Victoria (Mr. McKenzie), there are, of course, huge deposits of the character of coal he describes. There are also deposits in the other Maritime Provinces; but the great central provinces of Ontario and Quebec are in the main bereft of that supply. In Western Canada, coal is found in Manitoba in considerable abundance, in Saskatchewan in greater abundance, and in Alberta in abundance so very great as to make that province one of the main sources of supply of the world. The province of British Columbia also contributes its quota, and no meagre quota either. It is fortunate that in those provinces and areas of Canada where coal and, in the main, wood are not to be found, and where oil appears only in very limited quantities, we have another source of supply as yet only partially developed, though developed in greater degree than does any other country in the world develop it, namely, water-power. When one says that all those coal deposits lie in the provinces that I have named, that does not get us much further in the way of reaching a solution of what is called the fuel problem of Canada. There are many who loosely think or say that, inasmuch as there lies in Alberta 12 per cent, it is said—I think the percentage is larger—of the reserve coal of the world, we there may immediately rely upon a great bank against which we can issue cheques for the discharge of the national debt of Canada, or even a bank against which we can call for the supply of the fuel needed to heat our homes. There are a lot of graver problems associated with this question than the mere existence of what is described as an inexhaustible source of supply in the bosom of mother earth. If one talks in those terms it would be correct, I suppose, to say that in most sections of farm land in Western Canada there lies the potentiality of a million dollars' worth of value for the good of the people of Canada. The value is there all right. The content of the soil is there, the sunlight and the rains fall upon the lands, and if human brain and human muscle are

brought to bear and time does its work, then doubtless the wealth will come. The very same argument applies to our coal. There is in the province of Alberta alone, speaking from memory, 400,000 million tons of coal deposits, chiefly lignite, very largely bituminous, but with some anthracite, which, though not as hard as Pennsylvania anthracite, is claimed to have an oil content and other contents which make it a better fuel. But the fact is undisputed that the invested capital heretofore applied to the coal of that province has returned to the investor something like only one-eighth of one per cent of annual revenue. It has been charged against the policy of Canada dating back for decades that we have given these deposits away to speculators and others, but the fact of the matter is that up to the present hour the Dominion, as a Dominion, has not at all lost its fair share of the wealth of those deposits. It is true some of them have been fee alienated, but even in those cases a return has been secured, and I think a comparison between the position of the country on the one hand and the alienee or purchaser on the other would show that the country came off rather the better. The purchaser for the most part, though there may be exceptions, has secured very little at all on his capital invested, whereas the country has secured at all events the purchase price and the advantage of some development. Dating back I think to 1914, the alienation of natural resources ceased, except by means of leasing. A fee has not been given since that time, and the coal deposits, the same as other resources, have been let on rental terms and subject to royalty, both bringing in revenue to the Dominion, and subject to carefully devised regulations to protect the public interest so far as the best experts at our command could advise us how those interests could be protected. The difficulty is mainly that the market within transportation range of the coal pit is so limited that to turn out the coal on such a scale as would admit of cheap production is very difficult indeed. When we reach the day when that country will have developed and industries have become established there and population increased, the market will grow with the growth of the nation, and the output of coal will reach a scale where it will more easily compete in point of cost of production with coal fields in other lands.

Another factor in the situation is this: Western coal, and particularly Saskatchewan coal, is mainly a lignite deposit, and not of a nature that admits of much ex-