

conomic welfare, present and future, should have, therefore, no complaint in regard to coal.

However: At the time Moore wrote his article the finding of the Evans Commission, which cut the Alberta figure from 1,075 billion tons to 28 billion tons, was well known. This finding alone cuts away the foundation from under the entire estimate and why Moore, who is a prominent writer on coal matters, has chosen to ignore this essential report is hard to understand and he should be given an early opportunity to explain his position. If the Evans finding is genuine, and it has not yet been challenged, the figures given by the Macdonald Commission are not only not a guess but they are an imposture. This Evans estimate was later cut to 20 billion tons by the Barlow Commission. The Macdonald Commission refers to the Barlow report and the Commissioner had the benefit of a conference with Sir Montague Barlow, yet the Barlow report is ignored when the vital matter of coal reserves is concerned. Why?

In regard to the entire British Columbia reserve, stated to be 76 billion tons, this is mainly in the Crow's Nest area. When the Survey report was made mines were operating at Michel, Hosmer, Coal Creek (Ferne), Morrissey, and Corbin. Hosmer has since shut down because of structural difficulties and Morrissey because of excessive gas. Coal Creek, with 23 seams of coal totalling 172 feet of coal, has found that only about ten feet of this coal is workable. These very practical limitations indicate serious shortages in the reserves. When, also, the way the fanciful Alberta reserve crumbled when investigated, is considered, it is obvious that the British Columbia estimate, made by the same men, may do the same thing. An entirely new estimate of British Columbia coal is therefore overdue and until it is prepared only a very limited amount of comment is justified. There is no evidence here of the inestimable richness which the Commission reports. Any new inventory prepared should also not only include a revision of the old areas, but it should include the new areas, such as the Peace River, where large tonnages of good coal are reported. Even admitting that the Crow tonnage is large and that the Peace River tonnage is large, the vital question is not, Is it there? but, Can we get it?

Present indications are that the great bulk of the population of this province will be centered about Georgia Strait and unless we can get this coal to our population it will be of limited value. Delivery is, unfortunately, handicapped by a freight rate of \$4.20 per short ton from Ferne while the Peace River rate would be slightly higher. These rates prohibit the movement of this coal to the Coast in quantity and the Commission frankly admits that Crow coal "cannot compete" on the Coast. Thanks to subventions a small amount of Crow coal has a market in Winnipeg. Subventions have their merits but they do not eliminate handicaps: they only remove them from the shoulders of the coal company to the shoulders of the public and the public now feels that it has about reached the limit. The wealth of these fields have, therefore, like the flowers born to blush unseen, limited economic value. Doubtless conditions can be further improved and every effort should be made in that direction, but the handicap of location will always remain.

The bulk of our population depends, therefore, on Island coal. The MacKenzie report on this coal, also ignored by Moore in his writings, almost eliminated as a real reserve the entire Survey figure of 5,793 million tons. This matter was brought up at the Nanaimo sitting, when the suppression of this record was referred to and Mr. Hunt, representing the operators, submitted a figure of only 40 million tons, partly recoverable, as the reserve in the Nanaimo and Comox districts. This figure is ignored in the report, though on page 75 reference is made to an early estimate of 55 million tons, about 70 per cent recoverable. Premier Pattullo speaks of a popu-

lation in this province approximating that of Great Britain. This implies an adequate coal reserve, yet the Island reserve is adequate for only a very small population. For a population like that of Great Britain 40 million tons of coal would last only two months. If Commissioner Macdonald can demonstrate 5,793 million tons in reserve on Vancouver Island, a figure which he endorses when he endorses 76 billion tons for British Columbia, then coal troubles of the type now prevailing will be at an end in this area.

The idea that our coal reserves are so great that they cannot be estimated has been so firmly implanted in the mind of the Canadian that it is at the back of these altogether too frequent coal inquiries. Faced with heavy taxation, he wants to reduce all costs and coal costs are naturally the first that come to his mind. He does not yet realize the poverty of his country, even in coal; nor does he realize that there are few industries that give him better service at less profit than this same coal industry.

It is to be regretted, therefore, that the Commission has seen fit to continue these absurd stories. When large centres of population such as Vancouver, Winnipeg, and particularly Toronto and Montreal, have to pay high prices it indicates not abundance but a shortage. Countries that have an abundance of coal, such as the United States, have ample supplies within reasonable distances and in these places the price is low. In the United States the pithead price for bituminous coal ranges around \$1.75 per ton as against twice that price in Canada. These countries do not import half their coal, as does Canada; they export coal and do it without assistance. If Canada had an abundance of coal, both Nova Scotia and Vancouver Island, strategically situated, would be heavy exporters of coal, yet in the case of Vancouver Island there has been no coal exported since 1932 even with a subvention of \$1 per ton; and it has even been found necessary to bonus coal sold for bunkers to the extent of 50 cents per ton up to 60,000 tons and \$1 per ton beyond that figure, and even then the amount of coal involved was only 143,000 tons in 1936, the highest figure reached. This is not richness beyond the estimation of man, as the Commission states; it is a very serious state of poverty. Rich men do not have to be helped, nor do rich industries, and this national relief to the coal industry that now aggregates \$10,000,000 annually in tariffs and subventions, is a handout that is justified only because the coal industry is too poor to stand on its own feet. There is no use kidding ourselves any longer. When the great central portion of any country, containing the great bulk of the population, has no worthwhile coal at all it is time to stop telling its citizens about great abundance. Canadian coal statistics, it is admitted, are wonderful but we have to produce power and heat from coal and not from statistics.

In his letter to "The Miner" O'Halloran states, "The general public know that while judges are not infallible they observe the traditions of the bench in Great Britain and Canada and decide issues solely on the merits. It is because of this, coupled with their training in sifting evidence and their removal from financial and political pressure, that governments seek their aid in work of this character." We are also told in his letter of transmittal by the Commissioner that the report is not complete and that in due course a further final report will be submitted on matters not already dealt with. The Commissioner has, therefore, an opportunity to explain why the decisions of MacKenzie, Evans, and Barlow, men whose aim has also been to decide issues on their merits, have been so thoroughly sifted out of this very vital picture of the nation's coal reserves, and figures and statements, generally admitted by engineers to be farcical, have been approved for public use.

(To be continued)