

We have to meet American coal in the St. Lawrence valley, and to do so we must either cut our costs somewhat, or raise American costs to some extent, or do a little of both. I want to submit the suggestion to the government that it is possible to attain this end by a little sacrifice on the part of everyone. The operator must make some sacrifice and produce his coal at a rate lower than \$3.30; the traffic man must make a sacrifice and transport his coal from Sydney to Montreal at a rate lower than \$3.80, and the local government must make some sacrifice by refunding a portion, if not all, of the tax on the coal mined during the four winter months, because this is the particular time to which I am referring.

How are we going to do that? The idea is suggested by this famous Duncan report. Before the Duncan commission was appointed the maritime provinces were more or less in the doldrums; they were discouraged and rather hopeless; men were leaving and the industries were failing. The Duncan commission held sittings and brought in certain recommendations which, although they have not all been carried out, were still very hopeful, and the statement of the Prime Minister that it was the intention of his government to implement those recommendations had a wonderful effect throughout the maritime provinces. Now, the idea is this: Can we not have a commission similar to the Duncan commission to deal with this problem of winter unemployment in Nova Scotia? Let me make this suggestion to the government: Appoint a commission of five men, one representing the companies, one representing the traffic department of the great railway, one representing the industry, one leading business man and last but not least a representative of the miners of Nova Scotia, and let me say that the miners will send to that conference a man with an intelligence equal to that of any other man there present, and probably with a greater knowledge of the actual condition of affairs. There is no need to take any evidence; the evidence is all here and the facts are all in the possession of the Department of Mines. I am sorry the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) is not here to-night, or I would try to secure from him an assurance of his willingness to consider the idea. Possibly the Minister of Finance (Mr. Robb) may give me his assurance. I venture to think that if such a conference as this is held a solution will be found, and a recommendation from that commission will be of sufficient weight, backed up by public senti-

ment, to effect a remedy for this great unemployment. This is not a cure-all; I am not offering this as a fuel policy but rather as a pure experiment to deal with this question in a practical way. Up to the present no person on either side of the house and no witness whom I have heard or of whom I have read has ventured to make any practical suggestion which would offer a solution of this difficulty.

This is an important and vital question to the maritime provinces. Every year we have a recurrence of these same distressing conditions; every year our miners and their wives and children are in dire distress and have to be helped with food, clothing and the other necessities of life. Surely the time has come in the history of this country when there is sufficient intelligence and patriotism on the part of the general public to make some sacrifice, not only to alleviate the sufferings of these men but that out of it may possibly grow something which will furnish a permanent solution of this very difficult problem.

Mr. A. E. BOURGEOIS (Kent, N.B.): Mr. Speaker, it is with a feeling of hesitancy that I rise on this occasion, because I readily understand that it is the duty of a member attempting to address this house for the first time to move cautiously; for there is always that danger of wandering too far afield and of having to be reminded to tread the straight and narrow path. For that reason, Sir, I will be brief in my remarks.

It is my first duty on the occasion of this, my first address in this house, to extend to you, Sir, my congratulations on your unanimous selection for the third time to the exalted position of Speaker of this house. This is unquestionable and conclusive proof of your nation wide known impartiality and of your unfailing courtesy and distinctive personality. Although most of the people of our province, so far as I am aware, have never had the honour of your personal acquaintance, I can assure you that your distinguished career in the service of our country is a household topic in the province of New Brunswick, and particularly in the constituency which I have the honour to represent. May I also say that we admire the province of Quebec for the number of talented and distinguished statesmen it has contributed to the public service of Canada.

It is also my desire to congratulate the leader of the opposition (Mr. Bennett) on his elevation to the position he now occupies at the head of the great Conservative party. I am particularly pleased at this because of the