

*The Address—Mr. Gillis*

if they wanted to accept it. The minister of mines in the provincial government of Nova Scotia—and he would not be a propagandist against the government or the Canadian National Railways; he is a good Liberal minister—made a statement on the question also, and he was much more emphatic about it than either the coal board representative or the head of the coal company. The statement is quite a lengthy one, but I shall quote only briefly from it. It is taken from the *Post-Record* of Sydney, Nova Scotia, of February 1 and reads in part as follows:

Mr. MacKinnon said it was "hard to understand" the claim of Canadian National Railways that train services had to be curtailed because of coal shortage. In 1945, he said the C.N.R. used 122,000 tons of Canadian coal in central Canada and in the same year 7,296,000 tons of U.S. coal. The situation today was fairly similar.

The C.N.R. got most of its coal in Ohio.

And so on. He is commenting on our complete dependency on United States fuel and he goes on here to make a strong statement—I do not want to take up the time of the house with it—against our present fuel policy, if we have any. All of this argument of Mr. Vaughan and of Mr. Gordon has been completely knocked into a cocked hat by people who sell coal, who say that coal was available in the maritime region particularly.

There is no excuse for the present situation. Better excuses than those offered by the minister must be found. The matter should be no mystery to this house either, because time and time again I have risen in my place in this house and hammered away at this matter of a national fuel policy and the development of our own resources. We are only starting to get this thing working in the field of fuel, and as time goes on if we do not develop our own resources we are going to have much more serious repercussions than we are having at the present time. John L. Lewis, the disrupting of the industry, and his quarrel with the operators is a problem that belongs to the United States government; but the problem of keeping trains running in this country and supplying our industries with fuel is that of the Canadian government. If the Prime Minister and the members of this house are going to depend exclusively on private enterprise to do the job, then we are going to have just what we have at the present time; because, as far as I can see, the fuel policy of the Canadian government and the Canadian National Railways has been to market United States coal.

It is hard to understand how a government-operated road would buy the major portion of their coal in the United States, in Ohio and West Virginia, transport it all across the country and stockpile it down in Campbellton, New Brunswick; yet within a few hundred

miles there is plenty of coal available in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to operate that end of the system.

The question of competition comes up. Well, the United States certainly cannot compete with maritime coal in that particular region. They can compete to some extent in Quebec. We cannot compete with them in Ontario. Year in and year out I have emphasized the necessity of the government formulating a fuel policy, whereby the markets for our own coal within Canada could be made available to our own production. This whole question of the problem of the Canadian National Railways certainly places it in focus. We have been losing money. The Canadian National definitely must have been paying more for United States coal in that area than they would pay for maritime coal.

This whole question of the curtailment of traffic by the Canadian National Railways should be gone into because the Minister of Transport (Mr. Chevrier) and Mr. Vaughan, the former president of the Canadian National Railways, have got into a press controversy on the matter. I saw one statement by Mr. Vaughan in which he took the minister to task for the first statement that he made in the house. The matter of whether the Canadian government has anything to do with the management of the road should be ironed out. If the board of directors of the Canadian National Railways can take the kind of action that they took without reference to the minister or to the government, and affect the whole system, as they have affected it, then I think it is pretty near time that the House of Commons found out something about it. We have a standing committee of this House of Commons known as the committee on railways, canals and telegraph lines. I believe that committee should be set up and called together immediately. The heads of the Canadian National Railways, Mr. Vaughan, Mr. Gordon, and others concerned in the question, should be examined before that committee of the House of Commons. That is their job. A policy should be devised under which the kind of thing that has happened would never be permitted to happen again.

I always try to boost that road; I travel on it as much as I can. I assumed that it would belong to us, and as such it should be patronized by us. Every bit of business that we can give to it we should give to it. But I am certainly not satisfied with the kind of management that can run this thing by remote control without any reference to the government or to the minister. I am seriously suggesting to the minister, Mr. Speaker, that