

well, but the following figures will show what has taken place.

#### Output of coal in the United Kingdom

	Tons
1913 .....	287,412,000
1914 .....	265,643,000
1915 .....	253,179,000
1916 .....	255,846,000

On the basis of 1913, it will be seen that there is a decline which over the three years of the war totals nearly 90,000,000 tons of coal. It is not only the shortage today, but the accumulated shortage of three years that is telling on the world's coal supply at the present time.

The production of the United States shows up rather more encouragingly, but nevertheless, on the basis of 1913, there is still a shortage over the period of the war. The production of coal in the United States during the past few years, with 1916 closely estimated, has been as follows:

Output of coal in the United States including both anthracite and bituminous:

	Tons
1913 .....	570,048,125
1914 .....	513,525,477
1915 .....	*530,000,000
1916 .....	*597,000,000

\*Estimated

In comparison with these huge totals the Canadian coal production does not seem very important, but from our point of view it is all important. The following figures show a similar tendency during the war period to the figures given for Great Britain and the United States:

#### Production of coal in Canada

	Short tons
1913 .....	15,012,178
1914 .....	13,637,529
1915 .....	13,267,023
1916 .....	14,461,678

The decrease in Canada is larger than would be assumed from the foregoing figures, because the production of 1913 itself showed a decline over 1912 of 875,000 tons.

Similar reductions have taken place in other countries, notably in France, Belgium, the Central Empires, and in Russia. Possibly Japan may be an exception to the rule, but it is an almost solitary exception.

What are the prospects for the future? It is certain that no great advance is possible in the United Kingdom until the progress of the war will permit of the release of miners from the ranks. By deciding upon the selective draft system it is to be hoped that United States may secure itself against a depletion of the ranks of the coal producers, but because of the large number of men who have already left the mines of the United States to join the armies in Europe, and the

large number of men who have been attracted to munitions work and other employment, it is doubtful whether any marked advance over the production of 1916 is possible. In Canada, some increase may be expected from the Western collieries, but in Nova Scotia there will be a large decrease over 1916 figures. On the whole it is not to be expected that the Canadian production will exceed last year's output.

It seems therefore inevitable that the shortage of coal which was experienced last winter will be repeated next winter in a much more acute form, and this irrespective of whether hostilities cease this year or not. The only palliation possible—the word palliation is used advisedly, because there is no absolute remedy in sight—is to **discontinue entirely all enlistments of miners**, and to institute such economies in the use of coal as are possible. The daylight-saving scheme which proved so successful in European countries last summer, and is being adopted this year at an earlier date, was actuated primarily by a desire to save fuel and light, and it is quite certain that large economies are possible along these lines in North America.

Much more might be said, but sufficient has been detailed to show that the coal shortage is no passing phase, but that it is world-wide and promises to become much more serious than it has yet been. Some rather ingenious suggestions have been made in upper Canadian newspapers, particularly in some of the Toronto papers, that a solution of the difficulties might be found if the Government were to take over the collieries and operate them. It is a vain hope, and the experience of government operation that Canada has so far had is not such as to recommend it to those who daily face the problems of coal production and know the facts. Even were the Canadian coal production restored to its maximum of say 16,000,000 short tons, how infinitesimal is this quantity when viewed in the light of the accumulated coal shortage of the world during the period of the war, and the inevitable shortage that is yet to come.

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#### THE PRICE OF FOOD.

There appears to be something radically wrong in connection with the increased cost of some staple articles. Mr. Lloyd George announces in the House of Commons that there are 87,000,000 bushels of wheat in Canada "for the fetching." The Canadian Government feel compelled to allow the entrance of wheat into the United States because of the restricted outlet caused by submarine operations and the shortage of ships, and concurrently with this apparent surplus of wheat in Canada, the price of flour jumps in one week from \$12.50 to over \$15.00 per barrel, and it is confidently predicted flour will shortly reach \$20.00 per barrel! The Dominion Coal Company had the courage and foresight to use its purchasing capacity last summer to purchase flour in large quantities, and it is and has been selling flour to its workpeople at from \$3.00 to \$5.00 per barrel below the wholesale price. This