

ing their budget requirements. Even in the small matter of the fines that come in from prosecutions under the customs and excise act, although the provincial government furnishes all the officers and provides gaol accommodation when the prisoners are convicted, the fines go into the federal exchequer. The provincial government has to bear all the expenses. I think in fairness this government should refund to the province and to the various municipalities all the fines that have been collected from prosecutions under the act.

There is another matter closely associated with this question of the relation between the municipalities and the provincial governments on the one hand and the federal government on the other. The country store is passing away; the small storekeepers in the various towns and rural districts are going out of business. These people are being gradually driven out by the mail order houses. In my home city of Sydney I have seen a large room in the post office filled with mail bags crammed with catalogues from mail order houses. The people from the various rural districts send their money to these houses and get goods in return. This practice may possibly be defended on the ground that the goods are cheaper. Very well. But I ask in all seriousness why this government should use the post office department to facilitate the carrying on of this business without making some recompense to the municipality that is being hurt. The local storekeeper has to pay a certain amount of taxation for the upkeep of the town; the mail order house pays nothing. I submit that the time has come when these mail order houses should be made to pay a share of the taxation in the municipalities that are being affected, so that the local storekeeper may be given a chance for his life.

This forty minute rule, Mr. Speaker, is pretty much the same as a three months' note which a man has to meet: the time goes very rapidly. I have not an opportunity to develop any one of the questions which I should like to discuss, but I must hurry on now to the subject which is of supreme importance to me, namely, our fuel supply. We are all agreed in this country as to the great necessity of establishing some fuel policy—a national fuel policy if you will. We all admit that it is highly desirable that we should make this country independent in this respect. We have in Canada an ample supply of coal; at both ends of the country there are large coal deposits. But we are sending out of Canada over \$100,000,000 a year for the purchase of coal which could be

[Mr. F. MacDonald.]

supplied from our own deposits if only we were able to make them available. Of course, our difficulty lies right there. These coal deposits are to be found on either side of the country while the great consuming portion of the population is situated about midway. It seems a somewhat sad commentary on our boasted civilization that under such circumstances the miners of Canada should be in dire distress and that public subscriptions should have to be called for in order to feed and clothe them during the winter. This is going on from year to year and nothing practical appears to be suggested. Surely something can be done and ought to be done to meet the situation. Our problem in the province of Nova Scotia is winter unemployment. During the summer months we are able to ship our coal to the St. Lawrence market, but for four months in the winter our mines are practically idle and our miners out of employment. Some sort of cure has been offered by means of the banking of coal in winter. This in my opinion is a very poor substitute, because after all the banking of coal in winter simply takes that amount of the market away in the summer time. There should be some more satisfactory way of solving this problem of winter unemployment.

During the past three years we have had a number of investigations into the coal question and various suggestions have been offered. The witnesses who have appeared before the committees all express a desire for a national fuel policy, but no one will tell us what that policy should be. I do not intend to propose what I believe to be a national fuel policy, but I do wish to submit to this government some constructive suggestions which I trust will have some effect in alleviating the circumstances of winter unemployment in Nova Scotia. Let me state the problem simply to the house. It costs us \$3.80 a ton for coal at the pit mouth and another \$3.80 to land it in Montreal; that is \$7.60. American coal can be laid down there \$2 cheaper than this figure. How shall we meet the competition? I confess that when I came to this parliament two or three years ago I had the idea that the whole question could very easily be solved; all that was necessary was a high tariff against coal coming in from the American mines in such large quantities. I have learned since that the tariff is only one factor in a very complex problem, and that if we are to cope with the question of unemployment in Nova Scotia there are three or four factors that have to be considered and three or four parties to the problem who will have to make sacrifices.