

THE WEST—ITS FUEL SUPPLY.

Experience teaches—but governments learn more slowly than individuals. During last winter the Western Provinces hung for months on the perilous brink of a fuel famine. Newspaper reports gave harrowing details of privation and suffering. Often these stories were exaggerated. Sometimes they were untrue. But there is ample evidence that throughout the whole Canadian West the fuel shortage was seriously felt.

Indications are not lacking that the approaching cold season will bring with it conditions similar to those of last winter. Labor troubles, transportation difficulties, a rapidly increasing population, and the demands of expanding industries make the danger of a fuel famine more than possible. But even were the possibility of a coal shortage remote, and not, as we have reason to believe it to be, imminent, it would be only prudent for the Federal and Provincial Governments to take very precaution against a recurrence of such a condition of affairs as obtained last winter.

The railroads are busily safeguarding their own fuel supplies. They should be, and must be, held accountable if, through negligence or through inefficiency, they are unable to meet the reasonable demands of the people. But the volume and continuity of the fuel supply is as completely dependent upon the miners themselves as upon any other factor. A strike can work more havoc than the indifference or inability of all the railway systems together. The right to strike, when the comfort,

may, the lives, of thousands of human beings, and the welfare of an enormous commonwealth may be imperilled, may well be controlled by the Federal authorities.

It may here be remarked that, so far, the Lemieux Act has been a negative, rather than a positive, blessing. To give it greater efficacy, revision and additions are necessary. It is now hardly more than a tentative attempt at practical arbitration. In principle it is sound; in practice it appears somewhat weak. It may become necessary for the Dominion Government to amend the Act radically. If, however, hot-headed operators and contumacious workmen are set upon quarreling, the final remedy is government ownership and operation of the coal mines. Meanwhile, the Western fuel situation must be met. The responsibility of meeting it rests primarily upon the government and the railroads.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Talc and soapstone have been steadily increasing in value during the past decade. Hastings County, Ontario, has the only large producing mine in Canada.

The importation of sulphur into the United States has decreased by over fifty per cent. in the last three years. In 1900 the exported sulphur from Sicily to the United States stood at 162,505 tons. In 1906 this had fallen to 41,283 tons. Meanwhile there has been a steady growth in the consumption, importation and production of pyrite. This movement is of great significance to the holders of pyrite properties in Canada.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON SECRECY IN THE ARTS.

Dr. James Douglas

(Continued from August 15)

Faraday's mind was too absorbed in wonderment and almost religious fervor as the secrets of nature revealed themselves, to be captious, and to waste his energies in defining exactly what he had done, or in defending his discoveries and great conceptions from supposed infringement by other scholars. He never forgot, despite his wonderful original work, that generally the great investigators only lay the keystone in the arch which many less gifted workers have been erecting stone by stone. He did not consider it any detraction from his honor that he merely crowned the structure, but had not built it from the foundation. In fact, they are the greatest among the great who appreciate this limitation and recognize what they are to others. It is they who enjoy the beatitude of the meek, for in the highest sense they inherit the earth, seeing that they are endowed by the Creator with some feeble insight into the very secrets of earth and heaven. They know that these secrets are but the laws and phenomena of nature, which we through our ignorance and prejudice are slow in understanding, but which would soon cease to be secrets, if we could only disabuse our minds of false conceptions, and see facts as facts instead of as arguments for our theories.

Faraday felt, as every true disciple of science should feel, that when we penetrate to the discovery of even the least important of the facts of nature, we are unveiling one of God's gifts to humanity, and if so, we have no right to draw the curtain over it and conceal it again from God's children in order that we may make money out of it. Looked at from this point of view, may we not question the right to buy men's thoughts, and when through their thoughts we have unravelled some of nature's secrets, and learnt something to our profit, use our power to impose secrecy? Are we not enslaving a human mind, and can any slavery be worse? A natural phenomenon or force, one so understood that it can be controlled, is it not as much a gift of God as rain and sunlight and therefore part of the heritage of all mankind? Corporate wealth and corporate energy are doing much for mankind, despite the fact that of corporate shortcomings we hear just now more than we do of corporate benefactions. But corporate influence will have reached its most beneficent development when the wealth and activity and masterful management of the able men who wield it are united to the knowledge and skill of their technical staff, in not only discovering but