

heavy flow of marketings we are in a position where any serious accident or delay whether caused by weather or by the exigencies of war would put us in a very difficult position. The shipping authorities have been able to schedule sufficient tonnage to move the present supplies, but there is always the risk of accidents or other delays upsetting these schedules. But even if sufficient tonnage is put into our ports, there are physical and human limitations on the rate of loading at these ports and there is a very definite limitation on the total available supply of refrigerator cars.

Three weeks ago the whole situation was difficult and congested. Every department of this government and of other governments concerned have done their utmost to improve the position but, while not seriously worse, the position is definitely not improved and there are very real dangers of a backing up of supplies and movement to a point where actual spoilage of meat might occur.

For these reasons it has been decided to suspend meat rationing, including meatless Tuesdays, until the congestion in both storage and transportation is cleared up. However, the government is fully determined that to the extent of our ability the essential requirements of the United Kingdom and our overseas forces shall be met and it is, therefore, intended that meat rationing be resumed as soon as such a course will be helpful. I want to make it perfectly clear that meat rationing is being suspended, not abandoned.

In this connection I should emphasize that in order to facilitate the resumption of meat rationing the system of slaughter permits and the requirement that all carcasses be stamped with the permit holder's licence number will remain in full effect. It is proposed, however, for the duration of the suspension of rationing to permit individual farmers to slaughter their own live stock for sale directly to consumers without the necessity of their getting a permit or stamping the meat so sold.

Mr. GRAYDON: If I may ask one question, having in mind the information which must be available to the government alone, has the parliamentary assistant any idea as to how long we may expect this suspension to continue in operation?

Mr. ABBOTT: No; I am afraid I cannot give any indication as to how long it may be. That will depend upon any changes in the conditions which I indicated in my statement.

Mr. COLDWELL: May I ask if the present price structure is to remain?

Mr. ABBOTT: There is no change in the price ceiling.

SUPPLY

LABOUR CONDITIONS—UNEMPLOYMENT IN ALBERTA COAL MINING AREAS—STATEMENT OF HON.

MEMBER FOR BOW RIVER

Hon. J. E. MICHAUD (Minister of Transport) moved that the house go into committee of supply.

Mr. C. E. JOHNSTON (Bow River): Before you leave the Chair, Mr. Speaker, there is a matter I should like to bring to the attention of the government, having to do with a situation which exists in my part of the country, especially in the Drumheller valley. I have received several telegrams and a number of air mail letters in the last day or so, most of which I think are copies of originals which were sent to the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King). The situation is that in the Drumheller valley and other mining areas of Alberta more than half the miners have been unemployed since February 1. The people are becoming very much disturbed, and I have been asked to bring this matter to the attention of the government as quickly as possible.

It seems amazing that at this time, when we are making great proposals for post-war reconstruction, when the Prime Minister has promised that after the war everyone who can work and is willing to work will have a job, we should have a large number of men who are physically fit and anxious to carry on their work, in order to help an all-out war effort, forced out of their jobs. It is estimated that in the district to which I am referring some seven hundred miners have applied for unemployment insurance, and that a number of them are now receiving that assistance. Not long ago we asked all soldiers who had been miners to go back to the mines, promising them full employment. At that time a great many men were released from the armed forces to dig coal in the mines, but now these very men are walking the streets of the Drumheller district looking for jobs. I am informed that between eight hundred and a thousand of these men received postponement from military service in order that they might dig coal; yet now they, together with others, are thrown out of employment. Is it any wonder that the people in that district are becoming greatly perturbed? These men have no prospects even for the future. If that is the best we have to offer them, when we are supposed to be carrying on an all-out war effort, what sort of morale is that going to build up in this country? Supposing that next winter we have to appeal to these men again to go out and dig coal in order to keep the rest of Canada warm; what sort of response shall