

## CANADA—COAL.

It has been pointed out before, but cannot be pointed out too often, that the coal deposits of Canada make her relation to the maritime position of the Empire one of extraordinary interest. This is true, whether we have regard to the needs of commerce or to the maintenance of naval power. When a large proportion of the world's trade is carried in steamships, and when every effective ship of war that defends trade is propelled by steam, easy access to coal at essential points becomes a matter of the first consequence. This is true in times of peace, but infinitely more so in times of war, when coal for naval purposes can be obtained by belligerents only in ports under their own flag. It is generally admitted that in any future struggle for maritime supremacy an immense advantage would lie with the power which can retain the widest control of bases of coal supply. It is this idea which prompts our large national expenditure on coaling stations; it is, perhaps, less thought of in connection with territories possessing coal deposits.

Certainly the points at which Canada's great coal-fields are found may be spoken of emphatically as essential. Eastward and westward, on the Atlantic and on the Pacific, their location is striking enough.

Nova Scotia projects far out into the Atlantic, and there, as the most northern port on the continent which is open both summer and winter, we have fixed the great naval station of Halifax, which in time of war would necessarily be our chief base for defending what has become the greatest food route of the United Kingdom. Immediately behind Halifax and closely connected with it by rail are the Pictou and other Nova Scotian coal mines, which already turn out about a

million tons of coal per annum. Further north is the Island of Cape Breton. A century and a half ago, long before steam came into use, the keen eye of French soldiers fixed upon Louisburg in Cape Breton as the point from which the road to the St. Lawrence could best be guarded and French commercial interests maintained upon the mainland. The strong fortress is gone, but around the fine harbours of the island are numerous mines far more useful than was the fortress for the prosecution of commerce or, in case of emergency, for its defence. From these mines, again, are raised yearly about a million tons of coal of excellent quality for steaming and other purposes. The mouths of the pits are in some cases close to the shore, and as the mines are carried far out under the ocean a ship may be loading directly over the spot from which the coal is obtained. Nature could scarcely have done more to give advantageous position. The full significance of these coal resources to a great maritime Power can only be fully understood when we reflect—first, upon the increasing importance of the St. Lawrence as a food route; and, secondly, that, with the exception of what might be temporarily stored at Bermuda and the West India stations, these are the only coal supplies to which British ships would have the national right of access in time of war along the whole Atlantic coast of America. As things now stand, Britain is the only Power which has adequate bases of coal supply on both sides of the Atlantic.

These supplies, are of course, as useful for inland traffic as for ocean service. Nova Scotian coal finds its way in large quantities several hundred miles westward from the