

U.S. Strikes and Canada's Losses

(Continued from Page 15.)
this raw material.

The dependence of Central Canada on United States coal is cogent reason for the development of the coal mines of Nova Scotia to a point where, should for any reason the coal supply of central Canada be imperilled, the mines of our eastern most province could fill the breach.

While this article was in process of being written, the threat of a railway strike in the United States has unmistakably shown the dependence of central Canada on the United States for coal.

The Toronto Financial Post in its issue of the 2nd September heads an article on its front page: "Strike would shut off our coal supply". "Ontario Factories are entirely dependent on the United States for Coal." The article under these headlines says: "A prolonged strike would result in advances in the price of coal until the Maritime Provinces could compete." But, one may enquire, how would that help matters, seeing that the Maritime Provinces at this juncture cannot do much more than supply their own needs?

In this connection the importance of the second question propounded by Sir George Foster becomes apparent.

The possibility of utilizing the natural resources of the Dominion to greater national advantage than heretofore in the upbuilding of home manufacturing industries is one that interests Nova Scotia pre-eminently.

It is notoriously well-known that the population of Nova Scotia has not increased in anything like the same proportion as the other provinces of Canada, and the States of the Union to the South, and that, on the contrary, the population has shown a tendency to decrease.

It is possibly not so well known that Nova Scotia was producing and exporting coal before the mines of Pennsylvania were discovered, and that Nova Scotia coal was much favoured in Boston and New England about the time when the man who first attempted to sell anthracite was prosecuted for obtaining money under false pretences by selling a substance that looked like coal, but would not burn!

A Century of Coal Mining.

For almost a century coal has been mined and exported from Nova Scotia, until the production has reached the respectable annual total of seven million tons.

Yet how little has Nova Scotia to show in industry and manufactures for her long years of coal production?

Compare Nova Scotia with other coalfields, such as Westphalie, Belgium, the English Midlands, the Scottish Lowlands, Silesia, and the coal regions of the United States. The most important factor in the increase of coal production in Nova Scotia is, and has been that of the manufacture of steel. It may be pointed out that if the United States had conceived it to be that country's duty to discourage the manufacture of munitions of war for use in Europe, and had placed an embargo on the importation of United States coal into Canada for this purpose, Nova Scotia and that portion of Quebec which lies within the range of transportation, would have been the sole source of steel, shells and explosives that could have been depended upon in Canada.

The example of the steel industry shows clearly where Nova Scotia has been backward. Nova Scotia, the "Long Wharf" of Canada, is ideally situated as a distributing centre. Its harbours are all that could be desired. Would not the interests of Canada be better served if instead of exporting coal for so many years Nova Scotia had exported manufactured goods?

So far as the coal trade of Nova Scotia is concerned, therefore, the interests of Canada and the Empire would seem to be best served by the maintenance of existing protective duties to ensure the Montreal and St. Lawrence markets to Nova Scotian coal, and the greater development of home manufacturing industries in Nova Scotia itself, particularly in the coal districts. It can hardly be said with truth that the manufacture of iron and steel and some by-products of this industry, exhausts the whole of the manufacturing possibilities of the coalfields of Nova Scotia.

Hydro-Electric Power.

It is pleasing to note that some hope of emancipation from the dangers of United States dominance in the matter of coal supply is held out by the development of hydro-electric power in Ontario.

The generation of electric power on a very large scale at the pit-mouth has been successfully tried in Great Britain and in Germany. By the use of gas producers, gas engines, and the generation of electricity at high voltages very large districts can be supplied with electric power at low cost. In this manner inferior fuels and slack coal can be utilized, and the by-products of the coal can be recovered on such a scale as

to make the supply of electric power merely incidental to the recovery of these so-called "by-products." Electric power can be transmitted for hundreds of miles and sold at a figure greatly below anything attempted in Canada for public sale.

It obviously tends to much cheaper manufacturing costs to distribute the energy of coal in this centralized manner than to pay freight on the transportation of such a heavy raw material as coal for hundreds of miles before the manufacturing point is reached. A colliery district should not be only the place where coal is mined; it should be the centre of industry, with cheap power as the basis of low manufacturing costs. That such is not the case in Nova Scotia very brief enquiry will show.

More consideration might be given to the substitution of coke made from bituminous coal for anthracite imported from the United States. For most purposes for which anthracite is used coke could be advantageously substituted.

The suggestion made by Mr. Dick, the Mining Engineer of the Commission of Conservation, that small coke-oven plants could be profitably operated near the large centres of population in Eastern Canada, if combined with the recovery of by-products, is an excellent one.

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