

The Public Works department is also doing good work, and has been doing it for some years, though not very many, I am sorry to say, in introducing bituminous coal for heating the public buildings as far east as the city of Ottawa, and this maritime coal was selected after very close competition with American soft coal. The Public Works department gave the contract to the Minto mines, and that was made possible through the adjustment of the freight rates that was made. If a campaign was undertaken to show the people of this country that maritime and western soft coal is just as good, if not so clean, as American anthracite, and much cheaper, we should have solved to a large extent the fuel problem in this country. I see that the government has appointed a commission to investigate this fuel problem, and I hope that it will arrive at some sensible solution. It is undoubtedly a problem which should be settled, and if it be a political problem which could be put into the hands of the present Board of Railway Commissioners, the government at Ottawa should tackle it. Freight rates must be brought down in this country in order to solve the fuel problem. It will be practically impossible for us ever to be safe as regards fuel until we are self-supporting in that respect. I am one of those Canadians, Mr. Speaker, who do not wish to be at the mercy of a foreign nation, however friendly that nation may be, for the bite that I eat or the coal or wood that I burn to keep myself and my family warm.

The Welsh miner is taking advantage of the conditions in Canada to-day. Of course, I would far rather see the Welsh miner making inroads upon the coal trade of Canada than the coal operators of some other country. A few days ago there returned to England Sir D. R. Llewellyn, one of the greatest coal owners in Wales. He had just made an extended business tour in this country to investigate fuel conditions, and I understand that as a result of his investigation immense depots are to be built at Montreal and other places in Canada for the handling of Welsh coal. They have transportation down to a nicety, because he reports that on the question of freightage coal could be carried from British Channel ports to Canada and the New England States for \$2.50, as against \$4 for transport from Pennsylvania.

I repeat, Mr. Speaker, the government of this country, assisted by the representatives of the people in parliament, could undertake no more pressing problem in Canada to-day than this one of our fuel requirements and how they may be supplied. No better service

[Mr. Carroll.]

could be done by this parliament for the present and future generations than to give some of its time during the present session to the solution of this problem.

The standing committees of this House include a committee on mines and minerals. I have been a member of that committee for seven years, but the remarkable thing is that during that period it has never met except for organization purposes. And yet that committee, among other subjects, deals with one of the very essentials of Canadian life. Might it not be a wise thing for the government to consider the advisability of placing before the Committee on Mines and Minerals, as now constituted or otherwise, the question of a fuel supply for Canada? I advance this suggestion in all earnestness, believing that it deserves a fair meed of consideration at the hands of the government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have spoken somewhat longer than I intended. The hon. member who preceded me—

Mr. SUTHERLAND: Before the hon. member leaves this question, which is a very important one, may I ask him to give the House his views regarding the possibility of preventing the stoppage of mining through strikes. I ask my hon. friend, could a method be devised for overcoming this difficulty?

Mr. CARROLL: That is a big problem, and I am not going to tackle it just now. Strikes have been resorted to in this country for many years, and I have no doubt there will continue to be strikes long after my hon. friend and myself have passed away. I agree with the hon. member that the problem is a serious one. I agree that there are times in certain industrial fields in this country where strikes do some good. I also know there have been times when strikes in other industrial fields in this country have ruined operators and men alike. I am not against the strike as a weapon in the hands of men to better their conditions in life. Neither am I against the strike as a weapon for any legitimate purpose for which the various unions may think proper to invoke it. However, the question is a big one, and I shall not undertake to discuss it any further at the present time.

The hon. member who preceded me referred to the wants, the ambitions, and the aspirations of the farmers in this country, and assured us that these were never looked after or considered until a few years ago, when they themselves undertook to organize a political party. I am bound to say that the farmers themselves best know their own requirements