

made; what steamers have been placed at the disposal of the authorities; and what are the rates of freight?

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: As my hon. friend knows a Fuel Controller has been appointed and he has been at work on the coal problem for the last three weeks or more. He has been given Dominion-wide authority and scope, and has been making, and is continuing to make, all the proper inquiries with reference, first, to the possibility of obtaining the supply of coal that is necessary. I am speaking of anthracite coal at the moment, but his authority also extends to soft or bituminous coal. He is making inquiry as to the quantity which will probably be produced in Canada for home consumption, and, consequently, as to the quantity which will be required in order that normal and legitimate demands may be met. He has visited Washington, and other points in the United States, has been in communication with the responsible authorities there, and is assured, as I know, of co-operation in so far as they are concerned. He has appointed an agent in the United States to act under him, whose duty it is to report upon the supplies of coal, at what points those supplies are available, the prices at which they can be obtained, and as to transportation facilities from the points of production to the Canadian border. At the present time this gentleman is visiting the important centres in Canada with the Food Controller, and having conferences with municipal authorities and coal suppliers. He is gathering all possible information with regard to the quantities required, and the methods of transport.

Other steps are being taken in Canada to provide for the transport of coal brought in from the United States, after it reaches the border, and to provide for its distribution in Canada. To that end the Fuel Controller is in conference with the chairman of the Board of Railway Commissioners, and with the different railway companies. I understand arrangements have been made looking toward the timely and efficient distribution of the coal after it reaches the border. So much with reference to the general situation.

The anthracite situation in Halifax and St. John is, as my hon. friend has said, somewhat different, because it is practically impossible to bring coal in there by rail, and the ordinary way hitherto has been by boat. At the present time facilities for water carriage are very scarce, and very difficult to obtain. It is true that the disparity of

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cost as regards St. John and Halifax is I think mainly due, not so much to different prices at the points of production, although in obtaining coal from independent companies in New York there is a difference in the prices paid as compared with prices at the point of production where the coal is taken up by the railway companies.

The matter of freight comes in there. Rates are very high. Schooners and small vessels which take lumber from St. John and which hold themselves open to bring back freight, have their own rates of charges and they are, I understand, very high. How to obtain the necessary transport is a difficult question. The fuel controller has appointed an aide in St. John and another in Halifax. The gentleman in St. John is Mr. Frink and he with committees, is working upon the problem there. I am not aware that the Government have any steamers that can be placed at the disposal of parties in St. John and Halifax for the carriage of this coal. I would be inclined to think that they have not. It is also difficult for the Government to obtain vessels for that purpose. In the main, the transport will have to be arranged, I think, by the parties interested in obtaining coal, aided as far as they possibly can be, by the fuel controller and such agents as he is working in co-operation with. I have not seen the fuel controller for the last two or three days, but I have given my hon. friend such information as I obtained at my last interview with him.

Mr. PUGSLEY: I thank my right hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce for the information which he has given to the House but there is just one point in regard to it that I would like to refer to. I would like if he had conferred with the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Mr. Hazen), who is not now in his place, because the statement has been made positively in the newspapers in St. John that the Government, through the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, has arranged for vessels. It has possibly not come to the attention of my right hon. friend. It will be a great disappointment to the people of St. John to read the remarks of the Minister of Trade and Commerce. I hope that he will be able, after seeing the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, to give some more encouraging information as to the Government providing steamers for the transportation of coal.

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: I will take the matter up with the Minister of Marine and