

various points? If the owners of the coal mines dig that coal during the season when there is no demand for it they will have to finance it in order to carry it. The coal miner is not able to continue operations, to ship coal during the spring and summer when it is not needed, unload it at the different stations and bear the carrying charges. That is too heavy a burden for him to undertake. We will never have conditions right in this country until some method is adopted whereby there will be a large storage of coal continuously through the summer and winter. The province of Ontario is in a condition now that makes this need very apparent. We cannot tell at what minute we are going to be entirely out of coal and yet the burden of storing and carrying coal is too heavy for private individuals. With coal at a high price, it is a highly speculative operation to store coal unless you know what you are going to get for it when the winter season opens.

Mr. LEMIEUX: In Montreal the big industrial concerns are experiencing a coal famine. The Gas Company—

Mr. CURRIE: So is the Gas Company in Toronto.

Mr. LEMIEUX: —is suffering from a coal famine. The gas distributed last week had a peculiar stench which, it was explained, was due to the quality of coal they had on hand. Why should this country be threatened in that way? We have the coal in the East and in the West and we must provide the means to operate these coal mines and be more independent of other countries. Why should we not?

Mr. CURRIE: I agree entirely with what the hon. member says. There is no reason why it should not be done. Now is the time to begin shipping Nova Scotia coal to Montreal. The Government has built a great many ships and some of them might be employed in this work. It is far more important that coal should be carried to Toronto and Montreal than that it should be sent to Italy because our industries will suffer unless this is done. The same condition exists in the West. The farmers cannot tell when they are going to get coal. The coal miner sits down and does nothing all summer when he should be digging coal. Everybody wants his coal at the same time. The condition is very serious in Ontario at the present time. The United States coal mine operators and the railways are determined that we shall not get any coal. They are going to starve us into giving them free pulp and they are apparently adopting that

[Mr. Currie.]

underhand method for the purpose of doing it. If we are going to carry on business in this country I do not see anything else for this Government to do than to make a start by putting ships on to carry coal from our own coal mines in the Maritime Provinces to Montreal, Toronto and the West. Every ship load of coal that goes forward will help to break the embargo of the American coal owners against Canada because after all Canada is the best market for hard coal that the miners of Pennsylvania have. We take the bulk of their hard coal. They do not sell any hard coal west of their mines. It is all soft coal that is sold in Chicago and the West. But if you do begin using soft coal in Canada you have some piker get up in a council and say that you must not do so because it will blacken the wash on the clothes line of some woman in the outskirts of the city. It is up to the Government to see that we get an adequate supply for next year and one of the ways to do that is to see that the mining of coal is carried on continuously. The Government might finance the miners in order to enable them to continue operations during the period when coal is not in demand so that the coal could be stored at different points throughout the country to be delivered to the people when required. This is a very serious matter. Many industries in Western Ontario will have to be shut down. Gas companies have been mentioned by my hon. friend from Maisonneuve. The gas company in the city of Toronto has not two weeks' supply of coal ahead. Efforts have been made to bring about a condition whereby large quantities of coal might be stored in Toronto. There was a proposition some months ago that coking plants should be established by the principal cities to supply the fuel required when hard coal could not be had. But if you ever propose anything of that kind in Ontario or elsewhere, there is always somebody to get up and start raising a row about it—I do not know why.

The fact remains that unless we get coal in Ontario at an early date most of our industries that depend upon coal for heating purposes will have to close down and I believe the same condition confronts the West. I would like the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Meighen) to tell the House how much money it cost us to bonus the coal miners in the West last year while they did no work. Such a condition of things cannot be allowed to recur in this country. Coal is one of our great key industries, and the Government should take control of the situation. There is no reason why our