

ferences and unite for the purpose of the war. In every hour that has passed since the armistice the hands of the clock have been moving towards the time when the cement of the war would cease to hold, when the questions laid aside in war-time must come to the front again. It is this situation, in addition to the general unrest, which is giving rise to a feeling of uncertainty as to what may happen at Ottawa. The announcement of the intended retirement of Sir Robert Borden precipitates a difficulty which would have come later. The Government have been supported in the House by a party chiefly Conservative, but including a large number of those who have been called Liberal Unionists. To select a leader who will be acceptable to both these sections of the party will not be an easy task. Without the support of these Liberals the Government cannot stand. Would these Liberals remain with the Government, even under Sir Robert Borden, without some larger concessions to their views? Will they remain under any other leader?

On the other side there is a strong Liberal party, but it is still without the co-operation of many Liberals who separated themselves from the others on the question of conscription. The cross-benches last session gave seats to several members who had before sat with the Government. That section of the House was further enlarged by the arrival of two new men fresh from the people to remind the House—a reminder repeated by the election of another member more recently—that the farmers' movement, which has created a political revolution in Ontario, has broken into federal politics in a way that threatens to disturb the calculations of the old political parties. The coming session of Parliament will be one of more than usual interest, one the outcome of which may mean great changes in the political affairs of the Dominion.

The Coal Strike

AT long last the bituminous coal miners' strike in the Western States has been settled. The withdrawal of 400,000 miners from their work at the beginning of winter was an event of the gravest character. Stocks of coal were low. It was the season when consumers would in the ordinary way of business begin to provide for the winter's needs. The strike quickly made itself felt in the embarrassment of industries requiring coal. Then the railways felt the pinch. Drastic measures for reducing the consumption of coal became necessary. Trains were cancelled and the facilities for travel curtailed. In Canada as well as in the States the shortage was felt, for a considerable part of the Dominion is dependent on the American mines. Immense harm was done. The effects of the strike will be felt for quite a long time, even though the men have now resumed work. Let us, however, rejoice that a settlement has been reached and the operation of the mines has been resumed.

The injunction of the Indianapolis Court, obtained by the United States Government, was the first effective move toward a settlement. The leaders of the United Mine Workers decided to obey the order. "We are Americans," they said, "we cannot fight the American Government." The decision of the leaders was not followed by the miners generally. They still remained out, awaiting the result of negotiations which the Government set in motion.

At one stage Mr. Wilson, Secretary for Labor in the United States Cabinet, suggested that the men be allowed an increase of 31 per cent. The men were willing to accept this and perhaps the operators—the employers—though they at first declined would, in the end, have been willing, for they would have been free to pass on the increased cost of operation in the form of higher prices to the consumers. But the prospect of higher prices alarmed the Government and led them to recede from the proposal of Secretary Wilson. Fuel Controller Garfield then came into the dispute and advised that the men receive an increase of only 14 per cent and that the operators pay this advance without raising the price of coal. Naturally the men were reluctant to accept an increase of 14 per cent when they had the declaration of a member of the Cabinet that they should get 31 per cent. In the final stages, President Wilson intervened and made a proposal which has now been accepted. The men are to receive the 14 per cent increase, and a commission representing both sides is to be appointed to consider the relation of the advance in wages to the advance in the cost of living, and also the question of the prices that the consumer should pay. For the moment there is a settlement of the trouble, but the future is not clear. The employers regard the plan as a surrender to the men, and Mr. Garfield resigns because he regards it as likely to lead to an increase of prices to the consumer.

Once more Canada has learned the lesson of how largely she is dependent on the United States for a coal supply. Perhaps this situation cannot under any circumstances be wholly changed. But all will be able to appreciate more clearly than before the importance of utilizing to a fuller extent our water powers for the production of electric heat and power, and the improvement of our facilities for the transportation of coal from the Canadian mines to the sections of the Dominion where the fuel is so much needed.

Buying and Selling

THE desirability of producing in our own country everything that can be produced economically is so apparent that no argument is necessary in support of such a policy. The encouragement of home industry, especially in the various lines in which our country has the natural resources required to sustain it, is a trade policy to which all can subscribe. At

this time of reconstruction this policy is being warmly advocated by organizations and by individuals. On general grounds, and for the adjustment of our balance of trade, our people are discouraged from importing. In the case of our trade with the United States this view receives additional weight because of the severe discount on Canadian funds in the States, which adds heavily to the cost of importing. A check on our imports under such circumstances is desirable and necessary. Nevertheless there is an important feature of the subject which must be kept in mind. Many of those who desire to check our imports fail to consider the relation which imports bear to exports. We are every day called upon to increase our production, so that we may not only supply our home needs, but have abundance to export for the payment of our obligations abroad. To import little or nothing and export much seems to be the ideal which some people set up. But it is not a practicable policy. If we are to have large exports we must expect to receive large imports in return. President Wilson in his recent message to Congress dealt with that question in a manner that deserves consideration:

"Our favorable balance of trade has thus been greatly increased and Europe has been deprived of the means of meeting it heretofore existing. Europe can have only three ways of meeting the favorable balance of trade in peace times: By imports into this country of gold or of goods, or by establishing new credits. Europe is in no position at the present time to ship gold to us, nor could we contemplate large further imports of gold into this country without concern. The time has nearly passed for international governmental loans and it will take time to develop in this country a market for foreign securities. Anything, therefore, which would tend to prevent foreign countries from settling for our exports by shipments of goods into this country would only have the effect of preventing them from paying for our exports and therefore of preventing the exports from being made.

"The productivity of the country, greatly stimulated by the war, must find an outlet by exports taken to prevent imports and any measures taken to prevent imports will inevitably curtail exports, force curtailment of production, load the banking machinery of the country with credits to carry unsold products, and produce industrial stagnation and unemployment.

"If we want to sell, we must be prepared to buy. Whatever therefore may have been our views during the period of growth of American business concerning tariff legislation, we must now adjust our own economic life to a changed condition growing out of the fact that American business is full grown and that America is the greatest capitalist in the world."