

*Labour Conditions*

disrupted because of the war. The government then began to import more and more United States coal, and they handed over the market of one million tons that we had in Ontario previous to the war and approximately two and a half million tons that we were putting into Quebec. When that development took place I pointed out to the then Minister of Reconstruction and Supply our experience in the first war. That is exactly what we did at that time and it took us twenty years to get these Ontario and Quebec markets back at a great expense to the taxpayers of this country by way of subventions and subsidies. I pointed out that we were repeating that performance in the second world war. I suggested to the minister at that time that if he was handing over to the Americans the normal markets for Nova Scotia coal, he should do it under some kind of agreement or understanding to the effect that at the close of the war those normal markets for coal produced in Nova Scotia would be returned.

That was not done. I am suggesting that we should try to protect our markets by expanding the coal industry of this country to meet our own requirements as quickly as possible. We should cut down American imports, and thus save American dollars so necessary to our economy. Our fuel industry should be expanded, because the largest single import into this country is American coal. It is one of the big drawbacks in connection with the flow of American dollars. But nothing has been done in connection with protecting our market or expanding our industry.

The fact of the matter is that the reverse is true. The Nova Scotia industry is shrinking, and I believe there is a deliberate plan to shrink it. This failure to bring in Nova Scotia coal enables the government to save a good deal of money it would have to spend on subventions to assist that fuel into central Canada. The operators in Nova Scotia are following that line. There are mines which at the present time are not producing, and have not produced for some considerable time. The men are being weeded out of them, and the mines are being closed off. Consequently nothing is being done to develop new openings in that part of the country.

In addition to that, coal operators in Nova Scotia have become importers. I put a question on the order paper some two years ago in which I asked the names of the importers of American coal into Canada. I did not get that information. The answer to that question was that it was not in the public interest, or that it was not in the interest of those who were importing coal, to make the business of

one importer known to the others. I had not asked anything about their business; I merely wished to know their names.

I wanted their names because I know the Dominion Steel and Coal Company, in addition to being the major operator in eastern Canada, and holding all the leases, thereby preventing anybody else from coming in and developing any of the coal resources, has become one of the largest importers of American coal in eastern Canada.

In 1942 I rode up on the train with the then vice-president and general manager of that corporation. At that time I talked over with him this business of losing the central markets. He said, "We are not losing them. We are importing American coal and we are supplying our customers in Ontario and Quebec with that coal. Therefore we are holding those markets." He is holding the market as an importer. I believe they are still doing that; but the result is that they are shrinking our industry in Nova Scotia.

I suggest to the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) that in connection with the question of marketing Nova Scotia coal, or coal generally in Canada, and the development of our coal resources, it is time the government of Canada got down to the enactment of a national fuel policy. I admit that the long rail haul both east and west in the marketing of our coal in central Canada is a big drawback. At the same time, however, I know that coal produced in Canada can be put into different parts of this country in competition with American coal. I say that is possible because of the subvention now in existence in connection with the moving of coal either from the west or from the east to central Canada.

However, nothing like this appears to be in the minds of the government or of those ministers in particular who are responsible for the development of our resources. Indeed the reverse is true. While our coal production is declining, imports from the United States are mounting from year to year.

A couple of years ago when the mine workers of Nova Scotia were asking for wage increases, the hue and cry in the House of Commons, and from operators, was that greater production must be attained in the coal mines of Nova Scotia. It was stated that the man-day production must be stepped up. About 1,500 old men were weeded out of the industry and thrown on the streets with very inadequate pensions and with no provision made for their future. An attempt is being made to mechanize these mines. Production was stepped up; but in the face of that, in the last couple of months the company refused to bank coal and keep the