

## CANADIAN COAL SITUATION.

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that a nation, pressed by the demands of its own people, may be compelled, under certain conditions, to deprive other nations—in part at least—of even the necessities of life until the needs of its own citizens are met. No country can be expected to send out of its confines that which is essential to the very existence of its own people. Personally, I do not believe that the United States or any other country with a large outlook on present world affairs, will allow whole nations, especially those with whom they have been allied, to suffer direct distress with respect to fuel without seeking to alleviate it to the greatest possible extent.

When communities in Canada and the States during previous coal shortages have been in need of coal, certain communities adjacent to other sources of supply, such as wood, softer grades of coal, etc., were compelled to use these in order that the supplies elsewhere available could be distributed to those in greatest need. Correspondingly, it would not be surprising if a country like Canada, with vast fuel resources, were directed to speed up its utilization of its own fuel, and would not be left undisturbed, so to speak, in its enjoyment of burning what is now one of the luxuries of the world, namely, anthracite from the coal fields of Pennsylvania.

### Coal Conditions in the United States.

Let us next note what in general are the conditions in the great Republic across our border. Coal production in the United States has dropped substantially behind what it was during the war years. If the present rate of production of bituminous coal is maintained for the remaining 21 weeks of the coal year, the production will about equal the output of 1913. The production of anthracite is increasing over what it was a few weeks ago, but is still short of the demand. The coal stocks of the United States have been depleted. There is great demand for transportation. Car shortage will accentuate itself with the demand for cars to move the grain crop. The exit of miners back to Europe, serious strikes, and other factors, have contributed to curtail coal production and distribution in that country. If more serious strikes should occur in the States, it will tend to make the supplying of coal to other countries, including Canada, still more precarious. Canada cannot afford to overlook how her own interests may at any time become involved by serious coal strikes in the States. These strikes are an ever-present menace. Speaking in the United States on August 8th, Senator King, of Utah, stated that he had heard "that there was a programme to organize a great strike now, tie up the transportation system and take over the railroads, then next winter, when the people were shivering for want of coal, organize another strike in the mines, cut off the country's fuel supply, and take over the mines." The Senator expressed the hope—and which we all share—that government authority will be able to prevent such extremes being reached. I simply quote the Senator's statement as indicating possibilities which he thought of sufficient importance to bring formally to the attention of his colleagues. It is clear, therefore, that coal production in the United States must necessarily fall short of meeting even the most pressing demands.

### Common National Aims and Sympathies.

Canada is indeed exceedingly fortunate in being neighbour to a country whose national aims and sympathies are so akin to its own. During the war both countries have manifested special interchange of courtesies. In the past coal shortage, for example, the Fuel Controller, Dr. H. A. Garfield, announced that recognition of Canada's needs for coal would be on the same basis as though she were one of the states of the Union. Our own Fuel Controller, Mr. C. A. Magrath, ren-

dered signal services to both countries. I like to recall the sentiment manifested by our neighbours when great distress has arisen due to necessity corresponding to that begotten of the Halifax catastrophe—and such sentiment has been reciprocated by Canadians when conditions have been reversed.

Obviously, so long as such sentiments govern men's actions, the people living on this continent cannot be deprived of that which is essential to their existence. Nevertheless, with the growing scarcity of coal, the United States, no matter what her good will or desire towards Canada may be, may not be able to cope with her own and with the prevailing world need. There is no doubt that in the spirit and disposition manifested in the statements just quoted our neighbour will see that Canada is fairly dealt with. We should not, however, trespass unduly upon friendly accommodation.

### Canada Must Bestir Herself.

As we have now seen, the present need of coal is urgent and world-wide. If the United States, either in the interest of her own people or in the interests of peoples whom she may conclude to be more needy than Canada, should decide that it is more necessary to supply such nations with coal, with the result that Canada's normal supply be substantially reduced, who may reasonably find fault with such a course? Even apart from governmental action, could anyone find fault with the United States coal merchants if, in their efforts to capture as much as possible of the 160,000,000 tons of annual international coal trade, they sought to deal where they could do so most advantageously? If, under such circumstances, Canada be judged to be not the best market for the United States coal dealer, from whence does Canada hope to supplement any substantial lack in supply of her coal demand. Let me emphasize the fact that there is nothing new in these possibilities so far as Canada is concerned. The handwriting on the wall has for years been legible. The whole problem has been one calling for ablest statesmanship and not for political or other temporizing and expediency. The problem will never yield to any makeshift policy. I have often marvelled that so little has actually been accomplished with respect to its permanent solution.

It is gratifying to realize that serious effort is now being made towards the development of our lignite and peat resources; also, towards the increased utilization of our coal fields in the East and in the West. I understand that work preparatory to the construction of the carbonized lignite briquetting plant to be erected under the direction of the Honorary Advisory Council for Scientific and Industrial research for the Dominion Government is being pressed ahead with despatch. This is to have a capacity of 30,000 tons of briquettes per annum. It would take over 600 such plants to replace our present coal importation from the States. However, we are very glad that this start has been made.

From the foregoing comments it is evident that an intelligent outlook upon world conditions shows scarcely any aspect of them to be of more serious moment—immediate or prospective—than this coal problem. During these warm days we should be careful to take our counsel and warning from an intelligent outlook upon these conditions and what they betoken for the future, rather than from our feelings based upon the present state of the thermometer. Whether conditions of curtailed fuel supply for Canada be delayed from materializing this coming winter or next winter, or until some time in the future, nevertheless, as I stated before, I am firmly convinced that there is no menace to Canada's economic and general welfare at all comparable to the fact that she is at present so largely dependent upon a foreign country for her fuel needs. Without this foreign supply Canada most assuredly would be put to desperate straits. Gentlemen,

is not the fuel problem of this Dominion one of magnitude and great gravity?

### Canada's Water-Power Heritage.

Canada, it is true, is richly endowed with water-powers, but she can never depend upon this asset as a sole source of heat. We have about 19,000,000 estimated 24-hour low-water horsepower of which less than 2,500,000 horsepower has been developed. By no means may all the water-powers be economically developed.

For many years past I have been emphasizing the comparatively limited use which can be made of electric energy as a wholesale substitute for coal for heating—including the heating of buildings. There is no use whatever entertaining hope that hydro-electric energy as a heating agent may become an adequate substitute for coal for the citizens of Canada, and consequently a realization of this fact will facilitate the concentration of effort upon sources from which real relief may be derived.

### Canada's Coal Reserves.

What, then, is to be done? In a word, we must develop our own coal reserves. Considering the country as a whole, Canada in respect of quantity, quality and accessibility for mining purposes, possesses coal deposits which compare favourably with those of the greatest coal mining countries of the world. Speaking in round numbers, she has nearly 1,000,000,000 tons of semi-anthracite coal, 315,000,000,000 tons of bituminous coal, and 10,000,000,000,000 tons of sub-bituminous coal and lignite.

I shall not dwell on these enormous reserves. It seems out of place to emphasize how much we have latent when alongside of it we are not able to show how beneficially these assets are being used both for our own support and for the assistance of other needy nations. When the population of the Prairie Provinces are insured against yearly fuel shortage, we shall be more interested in hearing emphasis laid upon the enormous fuel reserves of these provinces; and when Canada produces more than her present amount of 2 per cent. of her total annual oil consumption we shall be more interested in hearing emphasis placed upon the statement that we have the biggest oil fields in the world.

Canada's only sane policy is to develop, and that as rapidly as possible, both her own fuel and power resources, and by co-ordination of transportation and other cognate agencies to provide for the distribution and storage of fuel in all communities of the Dominion. In some respects it is more important to move coal and have it adequately stored and distributed throughout Canada than it is to remove the grain out of the country.

### The Gas Industry and Research.

You, Gentlemen here assembled represent a great and nation-wide industry. I know of none which offers greater results in connection with the economical usage of coal—and let it be understood that greater economies in the burning of coal are going to be absolutely demanded in the future. I know that the art of gas manufacture has made great strides. I am not aware whether your organization has any central research laboratory, where your more technical problems are solved, and from which you may derive expert counsel—a kind of common clearing house for that more highly specialized technical information which, when applied, will efficiently build up your industry and fit it for world competition. With such a laboratory you might be able to discover methods for further refining some of your by-products, or for dealing with them in other ways so as substantially to enhance your profits and at the same time not unduly trespass upon other fields of commercial activity. However, this is not the prime subject of discussion, but I thought it was worth while just to express this personal view with regard to the great future that lies before you.

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