

Monetary Times

Trade Review and Insurance Chronicle
of Canada

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OUR FUEL PROBLEM

Canada is not in a position to do without United States coal at present. With substantial factory production and heavy freight movement, for war purposes, the Dominion will next winter need as much coal from the United States as during past winters, despite rigid economy in consumption. Certain parts of Ontario have already suffered from lack of coal notwithstanding efforts to supplement the supply with wood. There is good reason to congratulate Hon. C. A. Magrath, the Fuel Controller, upon the way he has handled the coal situation during the past severe winter. He has worked quietly and effectively, and is in close co-operation with Dr. H. A. Garfield, the United States Fuel Controller. It is confidently hoped that as a result of these co-operative efforts, the Dominion will be able to obtain its full share of coal for the coming winter. This will be needed even if supplemented by local wood supplies.

Our fuel problem, however, is not a matter related only to next winter. With the continuance of the war, with the increasing shortage of labor, almost stationary production, and rapidly increasing consumption, we are confronted with a national problem which demands serious consideration and action. The distribution of the coal we obtain from the United States is an important matter. If that coal is going to Western Canada, while Ontario is short and the Alberta coal producers cannot find a market for their output, there would appear to be room for adjustment. Its value as fuel and the production and the distribution of Western Canada's coal constitute one phase of our fuel problem. The development of our peat bogs is another important phase; and the obtention of wood supplies for emergency purposes is a third factor. We should not deal with our fuel question in a day-to-day manner. We should face the probability of the United

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States being compelled at some time in the future to curtail materially, or stop altogether, the export of coal to Canada. The present is the time to consider the development of our fuel resources if for no other reason than insurance against future contingencies.

EMPIRE TRADE

The trade commissioner service of the United Kingdom is of recent origin. At the Imperial Conference of 1907, Sir Joseph Ward, Prime Minister of New Zealand, called attention to the need for official commercial representation of the United Kingdom in the self-governing Dominions. Mr. Lloyd George, then president of the Board of Trade, was able to inform the Conference a few days afterwards that arrangements for the appointment of such officers were being made. The measures which were subsequently taken resulted in the institution, in 1908, of the present service of four Trade Commissioners, one being appointed for Canada and Newfoundland, and one each for Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

An extension of the service was strongly recommended in a report of the Dominions Royal Commission issued in February, 1917. The Board of Trade had simultaneously been engaged on a scheme for the strengthening of the service and it has now been decided to increase the number of British Trade Commissioners from four to fifteen or sixteen. Whereas in all the dominions there were only four commissioners, Canada alone in future will have four, the senior officer in Canada dealing also with trade in Newfoundland. The remaining eleven or twelve commissioners will be stationed in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, the West Indies and the Straits Settlement.

This important development is naturally of considerable interest to the British Empire at large, especially as