

THE CANADIAN LIBERAL MONTHLY
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THE FUEL SITUATION.

The fuel situation in Canada is a serious one. In many centers the people have suffered and are suffering from lack of coal and efforts to mitigate these conditions are not in every case successful. The situation is a reflection upon the administration which has neglected to provide against a contingency which has been freely predicted by those in a position to lend authority to their opinions. We have been repeatedly warned that there was every likelihood of a coal shortage this winter, but the government through its fuel controller, seems to have taken no heed of the warnings until the condition was actually upon us. Now we are absolutely dependent upon the goodwill and co-operation of the American state and national food controllers. Already the controller of the state of New York has expressed the conviction that Canada has been getting too much coal from the republic, coal which, in his opinion, is needed in the country and which should not be permitted to go out until all home demands have been satisfied. If this opinion should be concurred in it is altogether likely that our coal supply would be very considerably reduced, with results almost too discouraging to contemplate. Such a step would spell ruin to many of our industries, for it is inconceivable that any coal would be spared our factories or other enterprises until the people were assured the requisite fuel for domestic purposes.

In both the federal food and fuel controllerships the results cannot be said to have come anywhere near expectations. The food controllership has become pretty much of a national joke, although the subject is not one for jesting. Prices are higher than ever before and commodities are scarcer, with no end in sight for either of these manifestations. Now comes the vital matter of fuel. The situation is one calling for prompt action and a display of executive ability which has not as yet been noticeable in either of the departments referred to.

A LIBERAL POLICY ADOPTED.

Another of the Liberal policies has been adopted by the administration in the announcement that a very extensive shipbuilding program is about to be undertaken by the government. The step is one which was persistently urged in the Commons on many occasions during the past three sessions by Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his party, and as often rejected by the government, at that time engaged in encouraging the establishment of private munition plants and other individual enterprise, all of which should rightly have been under the direct control and management of the government for the benefit and welfare of Canada and the Empire at large. But the pressure of the war and the demands upon ocean transportation have eventually convinced even the present administration of the wisdom and foresight of the Liberal

view in this regard, and the shipbuilding program has been undertaken with a flourish of trumpets as another proof of the determination of the government to prosecute the war as it should be prosecuted. But the fact is clear and undeniable that this is merely an adoption of a fragment of that constructive program which was being evolved by the Liberal leader months ago.

However, the action of the government in this way will be much appreciated. It is never too late to learn but sometimes it is almost too late to begin to follow the excellent and superior advice of more constructive leaders. In this instance all true Canadians will hope that the shipbuilding program will be energetically carried out and that the aid of the Dominion to the cause of the empire will in this important detail be manifest at as early a date as may be.

LEST STARVATION ENSUE.

Mr. Hoover Emphasizes Need of Food Conservation.

In a statement to members of the United States Food Administration, Mr. Herbert Hoover says in part: "The food situation in Europe is far graver than when the preliminary survey of the food supply of the world for this year was made. . . . The harvests of our Allies have proved less than we had contemplated, and the great curtailment of shipping by the submarines during the last few months has further prevented them from access to more remote markets. Beyond the demands of the Allies there is a call upon us by the friendly neutrals for food supplies, and if we can not at least in part respond to these neutral calls, starvation on an unparalleled scale must ensue.

"Food has now taken a dominant position in the war, and we must ask the American people to sacrifice far more than was at first thought necessary. We have exported the whole of the surplus of the wheat from this harvest after reserving to ourselves an amount sufficient for our normal consumption of seed and flour until the next harvest, and therefore the amount of wheat flour that the United States can contribute to mix with the war bread of our Allies during this winter will be simply the amount that our people reduce their consumption month by month. In other words, **every grain of wheat or its products that the Allies receive from the United States from now on will be exactly the amount which our people have saved each month on their behalf.**

"The Allies to-day ask for 25 per cent more meat and fats (pork, dairy products and vegetable oils) than we consider our monthly production permits us to send them without trenching on our own supplies, or, on the other hand, unless we can consume less. Due to the shortage in shipping, our available sugar supplies must be less than normal from the present time forward.

"Thus every particle of diminished consumption by the American people is one particle more for the soldiers, men, women and children of our Allies and for the starving people in other countries. This is a personal obligation upon every one of us toward some individual abroad who will suffer privation to the extent of our own individual