

Coal Shortage

In western Canada arrangements were made for provincial governments to issue emergency certificates as a war measure, to allow qualified men to work underground at coal cutting, without having to serve the full probationary period. In the three prairie provinces arrangements were made under which provincial officials might, consistently with selective service regulations, recruit men for the coal mines. Farmers especially were solicited, and some were secured. Farmers generally, where not needed on the farms, were urged to take work in the coal mines during the winter, and a considerable number responded.

In British Columbia 280 former coal miners were taken back to coal mining from other industries. Through employment and selective service offices, coal mines have been asked to provide lists of former employees, and these men are being approached with a view to their returning to the coal mines.

The acute shortage of domestic fuel resulted in special appeals to mine operators, and more especially to miners, to speed up production, which in the main meant asking miners to work harder and longer hours, to cut down absenteeism and certainly to avoid stoppage of work through strikes. During December and January, while we were not entirely free from stoppages due to strikes, in the main the men responded to the appeal very well, and the strikes that did occur were minor, of short duration and quickly settled.

Another side of the coal production problem is the financial ability of the mines themselves to remain in operation. The emergency coal production board was given power to direct the production policy of mines and, where necessary, to provide financial assistance to mines which find themselves financially unable to continue in maximum production. This has been one of the major aspects of the board's work since its formation, and it is hoped that the measures taken will be reflected in increased output.

In so far as this is a distribution problem it is under the jurisdiction of the coal administrator of the wartime prices and trade board, and I am informed that every effort is being made to distribute available supplies to the best advantage. Foreseeing the coming shortage in the west, the coal administrator, as long ago as last September, prohibited the movement of Alberta coal into the Ontario market. More recently, Alberta coal which usually moves into Manitoba was diverted to Saskatchewan, and coal from the United States was brought from the head of the lakes to fill up the resulting deficiency in Manitoba. Instructions have been issued that deliveries to consumers in western Canada are to be limited to

[Mr. Hsley.]

those actually in need. In connection with the fuel situation in western Canada, I should point out that due to the shortage of labour, wood fuel supplies upon which many areas are dependent were greatly curtailed, further accentuating the demand for coal.

Within the last few weeks, regional representatives of the coal administrator have been appointed for Winnipeg, Calgary and Vancouver to regulate and allocate distribution of coal.

In eastern Canada there have been no serious difficulties with the possible exception of isolated shortages of anthracite coal due to the strike in the Pennsylvania fields during January, and some difficulties in distribution due to lack of labour and severe weather conditions.

DEFENCE OF CANADA REGULATIONS

INQUIRY AS TO SETTING UP OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE DURING THE PRESENT SESSION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. ANGUS MacINNIS (Vancouver East): I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether the special committee on the defence of Canada regulations, which sat during the last three sessions, will be reconstituted this session.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): I mentioned in my remarks at the opening of the session that the committee would be reconstituted.

CANADIAN NAVY

ARTICLE IN "BOATING" MAGAZINE BY COMMANDER A. D. MACLEAN (RETIRED)

On the orders of the day:

Mr. GORDON GRAYDON (Leader of the Opposition): On Wednesday last a question was raised by the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggart (Mr. Coldwell) in regard to certain charges by Andrew D. Maclean, retired commander, R.C.N.V.R., entitled "Fairmiles and Foul". At that time the Prime Minister intimated he might have a statement to make with respect to the matter. One of my reasons for calling the attention of the Prime Minister to the question arises from a letter I received yesterday from a parent of a sub-lieutenant in the Canadian navy, who expressed grave concern over the charges made in this article. Is the Prime Minister in a position now to make some statement? I think the matter is sufficiently serious and urgent to warrant some comment being made by the government.

Hon. C. G. POWER (Acting Minister of National Defence): As my hon. friend knows, the Minister of National Defence for Naval