

The Address—Mr. MacInnis

unsold, and there are grimmer times ahead in Europe. There are over 34,000 less miners in Britain during this last year.

We have heard a great deal, too, about competition from United States coal, and how it has been possible to ship United States coal to central Canadian markets and sell it at a lower price than Nova Scotia coal. United States competition still presents a problem, but it is interesting to note that in 1958-59 imports of United States coal into Canada decreased by 5.6 million tons or 32.2 per cent.

The coal problem, as I have indicated, is nothing new. But I think there is no doubt in anybody's mind that it has been only by the action of this government and of this parliament that the industry has continued on a fairly even keel during these past two or three years. The simple fact of the matter is that parliament, by putting up the cold, hard cash, has kept the industry alive. By increased coal subventions, by special assistance for abnormal stockpiling of coal, by unremitting efforts to find new markets for Canadian coal, by act of parliament, by orders in council, by cabinet directive, the present government has staved off the worst of the human distress which ordinarily accompanies a crisis in a sector of industry.

The government appointed the royal commission of Mr. Justice Rand to inquire into the long term problems and long term solutions of the coal industry. I see no solution for the miners in the Rand report. However, and this is most important, I fail to understand how the company could possibly use this report to justify its action. If this statement is interpreted as an endeavour to impress the government with my own opinion, that interpretation is entirely correct and in line with my duties as a representative of the coal miners. The government, of course, is giving further study to this report before any final decision will be made.

I have mentioned the competition from United States coal, which is still a problem despite the remarkable decrease in imports over the past couple of years and despite government subventions which have enabled our Nova Scotia coal to compete successfully in many of our central Canadian markets. It goes without saying, of course, that the stiffest competition, both now and in the future, is from other competitive fuels. In this respect, while I applaud the efforts of the government in the field of basic research, I am convinced of the need for a greatly expanded program. The coal producers in co-operation with governments at the federal and provincial levels, with scientists and educational institutions, should embark on a serious,

intensified program of coal research in the hope of finding new uses and consequently new markets.

All that is required, Mr. Speaker, to maintain these mines and to keep the miners and their families in the towns in which they live is a market for one million tons of coal, a fraction of the tonnage Canada imports annually from the United States. In a country whose demands for electrical energy cannot be fulfilled by our water resources it seems unrealistic to assert that a million tons of Canadian coal cannot be sold to Canadians.

Nova Scotia must have a market in Ontario and Quebec for its coal. I appeal to the people of Ontario and Quebec to help us in that spirit of unity and Canadianism about which I spoke earlier. Canadians have dug deep in the past to help in the face of disaster. All I ask at this time is action to prevent such a disaster.

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but under the new rule his time is limited to 30 minutes and it has expired unless the house is prepared to give him indulgence.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. MacInnis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, Nova Scotia must have a market in Ontario and Quebec for its coal, and I appeal to the people of Ontario and Quebec to help us. As I said, Canadians in the past have dug deep to help in the face of disaster. It is my wish that they consider doing something at this time. With the help of the federal government through subventions and with the co-operation of the Ontario hydro commission and the understanding of the people in these provinces, our mines can be kept open and our peoples given a new chance to share the productive wealth of the nation. To the people of both provinces it would mean very little but to the people of Cape Breton it could mean the difference between good times and bad ones.

I am reminded that a few years ago when the St. Lawrence seaway project was being discussed and the possibility of detrimental effects to the ports in Nova Scotia came into the conversation, the late Hon. Angus L. Macdonald at that time expressed the opinion that if it is good for Canada, it is good for Nova Scotia. To that expression I should like to add, in the case of the coal situation, that if it is good for Nova Scotia, it is also good for Canada. It is true that it might place financial demands on the federal government in providing the necessary subventions; but if a means could be found to sell another million tons of coal the ultimate demands on the treasury from Nova Scotia would be lessened.