

Q. In Montreal?—A. Absolutely none.

Q. Or in the province?—A. Or in the province either.

Q. You heard of no distress?—A. There has been none.

Q. Or no suffering for the want of coal?—A. You see, people said that they could not use soft coal. Talking about substitutes, you know there was some soft coal used, and some people may continue to use soft coal. That is, it was satisfactory. People who will take a little care to run their furnaces can use it.

Q. In your opinion soft coal can always be used as a substitute if the situation demands it?—A. Absolutely. No person need suffer if there is soft coal.

Q. And we have an ample supply of soft coal?—A. I know a big operator in New York in the anthracite business who burned about 150 tons of soft coal last winter. He got panic-stricken before the strike was finished and he put in three carloads of coal, and says he got on very well with it. This was not in New York City, but outside. That is only to give you an illustration.

*By the Chairman:*

Q. There is another phase of the business, Mr. Robertson, upon which you can enlighten us. We have had brought to our attention that with the same price for anthracite at the mine, and after allowance is made for any difference there may be in freight rates, there is a difference in the prices at which the coal is sold to the consumer, say, in Montreal, in Ottawa and in Toronto.—A. Yes?

Q. And we are all familiar with the fact that people are inclined to underestimate the cost of doing business, and also with the fact that people in the coal trade are like other people sometimes: they like to get all they can.—A. Surely.

Q. Now, will you tell us—A. What should be the comparison between Toronto and Montreal?

Q. Yes, or the various elements that enter into the cost to the merchant.—A. One of the big factors in the delivery of coal to-day is the cartage.

Q. Yes?—A. The cartage of coal in Montreal and the cartage in Toronto or Ottawa are different propositions. You know we have those hills and we have to double up—to put two teams to do what one would do elsewhere. That is necessary on a great portion of our business. Anything that goes above Sherbrooke street and up through Westmount has to be hauled with a double shift. That adds very much—I would not like to say exactly what it adds to the cost, but it adds very materially to the cost of delivery.

Q. How large a proportion of your output, roughly speaking, would go to those districts?—A. Oh, a very large proportion to-day.

Q. And what does not go much above the hills makes up in distance? I mean, if you go to Outremont.—A. There is a hill when you go to Outremont. You have to climb over Sherbrooke street. Nearly every day they go out, for every delivery going out to Westmount, we have to carry an outfit to do the towing. And it is not only that difficulty, but when you get to a man's house he perhaps lives in the third storey and you have to pull that up bag by bag. People do not consider those things. If in delivering your coal you had only to throw it down at the man's door, that would be quite a different thing, but we not only carry it, but carry it in.

Q. What is the practice of the trade in order to average those? Do you charge?—A. Sometimes we charge a little more.

Q. You charge more for bagged coal?—A. Yes. We charge extra delivery sometimes too. We have to.

[Mr. Farquhar Robertson.]