

THE PRICE OF COAL

Before the Orders of the Day:

Hon. R. LEMIEUX: Honourable senators, before the Orders of the Day are called I should like to direct a matter to the attention of the right honourable leader, if I am allowed to do so. On the eve of a winter which will possibly be very severe, especially for poor people—and I think the majority of the people are poor—I am informed that there is a combine of coal merchants. The price of coal some years ago was about half what it is to-day. It is surprising that a product that cost, say, only \$8 a ton a few years ago is now selling at \$14, \$15 and even \$16 a ton. Many people would be grateful to the Government if the situation were investigated by the Minister of Labour, and I would ask the right honourable gentleman kindly to refer the matter to the Minister and stress the urgent necessity of relieving the public mind of the impression under which it is at present labouring.

Right Hon. ARTHUR MEIGHEN: Honourable senators, the subject of an increase in coal prices, or the allegation that an increase has been brought about by a violation of law, had not previously been drawn to my attention. As a private citizen purchasing coal, like other citizens, I have been very gratified to find in my own bill a reduction from the price of two and three years ago. However, I do not think the fact that any former Government may have been delinquent should at all impede the present one in doing its duty, if there is a duty to be done in the premises, and I shall call the attention of the Minister of Labour to the points made by the honourable gentleman this afternoon.

CONVERSATION IN READING-ROOM

Hon. J. J. HUGHES: Honourable senators, I desire to call the attention of the House to a practice that I think is wrong, and one that is growing; that is, the holding of loud and long conversations by some senators among themselves and their friends in the reading-room, a practice which makes it difficult for others to read at the same time. This condition has been existing for some years, but it appears to be worse this session than formerly. If it is against the rules it should be stopped; if it is not against the rules, I think the rules should be amended. Should I be the only one who is inconvenienced and who objects, I will withdraw my objection, but I think I am not the only one.

Hon. G. LYNCH-STANTON: If the honourable gentleman and other members would

speak loudly enough for everyone to hear, there would not be so much conversation going on.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: The honourable gentleman's complaint was about conversation in the reading-room. I am not able to be in there sufficiently either to verify or deny the accusation, but I shall bring the matter to the attention of the appropriate committee of the House.

Hon. Mr. BUREAU: When a senator gets up in the middle of the Chamber and looks at the Speaker while making an address, it is very difficult for the older members sitting back here to hear or understand what is being said. I think that when a member is addressing this House he should face the opposite side, the Government or the Opposition, as the case may be.

Right Hon. Mr. GRAHAM: You get bad habits in the Commons.

THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S SPEECH

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Senate resumed from yesterday consideration of His Excellency the Governor General's Speech at the opening of the session, and the motion of Hon. Mr. Poirier for an Address in reply thereto.

Hon. RAOUL DANDURAND: Honourable members of the Senate, I desire to convey to the honourable gentleman from Acadie (Hon. Mr. Poirier) and the honourable gentleman from Richmond-West Cape Breton (Hon. Mr. Macdonald) my appreciation of the very interesting addresses that we heard from them yesterday. The honourable gentleman from Acadie has been a solid pillar of this temple since 1885. We all admire his continuing youth, which we hope he may maintain for very many years to come. He delivered his speech in excellent and most appropriate French; he could not do otherwise, for he is a master in the language; and we only hope that he will continue his activities among us for many years.

As to the honourable gentleman from Richmond—West Cape Breton (Hon. Mr. Macdonald), I hope that, enjoying as he does the fine breezes of the Atlantic, he will follow in the footsteps of our honourable friend from Acadie (Hon. Mr. Poirier) and remain to become one of the pillars of this temple.

We have just received in this Chamber a member hailing from Montreal (Hon. Mr. Rainville). From this side of the House I desire to welcome him. I do so with all the