

Mr. A. E. ROSS (Kingston City): Mr. Speaker, I can hardly agree with the minister that this question was not discussed by the former committee; I cannot recall any phase of the coal situation that was not taken into account by that committee, and I think he will find from the reports that this and all other features of the coal problem were considered. The minister does not in this parliament, nor did he in the former parliament, seem to be seized with the seriousness of the situation. Let me draw your attention to these facts, Mr. Speaker. On January 22 last the member for West Calgary (Mr. Bennett) brought to the attention of the minister what he considered to be a very serious situation, and on January 25 the member for Bow River (Mr. Garland) also called the attention of the minister to a similar condition. On that occasion the minister replied:

There may be a serious emergency so far as the miners of Alberta are concerned, but at the moment there is no emergency at this end.

At that very time the situation was serious in eastern Ontario. Only two months before that the minister must have been aware of the emergent conditions, because he is reported in a Canadian Press despatch from Ottawa, dated December 28, under the heading, "Hon. Charles Stewart warns the public of possible acute situation," as follows:

Hon. Charles Stewart in an interview here strongly recommends householders "to immediately protect themselves by laying in supplies of whatever fuel they can obtain at present prices."

And so on. So at that time there was a serious fuel situation according to the minister; but on January 25 he stated there was no emergency at this end, although at that time there was an alarming situation. The minister seems to be imbued with the same spirit to-day in dealing with this subject: he is going to wait until this committee reports, just as he did before—

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): May I interject? I never said anything of the kind.

Mr. ROSS (Kingston): Mr. Speaker, the situation is so serious to-day that the government should assume full responsibility. This government has achieved an unenviable reputation for appointing committees and commissions of one kind and another which have never accomplished anything. We had a pulpwood commission appointed by the leader of this government, and what did they do? They went gypsying in a modern way, enjoying a trip in excellent cars, Pullmans and so on, until the Finance minister had to send out a message calling them home, removing them

from the job and the payroll. I cannot see that anything will be accomplished by this committee; the matter is so serious to-day that the government should set themselves to its settlement, and deal with it and take the responsibility.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Mr. Speaker—

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: Is this to close the debate?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: No, it is not.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: If the mover speaks the debate is closed, but if it is quite clear that such will not be the case, it is all right.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the point?

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: The right hon. Prime Minister rose to speak, and I pointed out that that would close the debate, as he had made the motion.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I just wished to say a word in explanation.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: I am quite content to have the hon. gentleman speak on the understanding that the debate is not thereby closed.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I merely wish to make an explanation. So far as the government are concerned we are simply seeking to meet the wish of the hon. member for East Lambton (Mr. Armstrong), who expressed the desire that this committee be appointed. In order to meet the wish of the hon. member the government agreed to appoint a committee, but if hon. gentlemen opposite think such a committee would serve no purpose, we are quite prepared to withdraw the motion.

Mr. F. P. QUINN (Halifax): As this matter is of the greatest importance to the province of Nova Scotia, from which I come, and which province has the greatest developed coal resources in the whole Dominion, I might point out that in the composition of this committee Nova Scotia has no representation. The province of New Brunswick, which has comparatively small coal resources, is represented; the province of Alberta is also represented, and I would like to ask why there is no representative on that committee from the province of Nova Scotia.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: My hon. friend has asked why there is no representative of Nova Scotia on that committee. My understanding, Mr. Speaker, is that the whips of the different parties were requested to hand in the names of those members whom they wished to serve on that committee. As most