

oil, which was worth two tons of coal calories. That was some of the competition we had to face, and also the fact that the Americans were now offering long term contracts, and if we had also to offer long term contracts our profits must be further reduced because the price would have to be lowered. So one could only say that, though we were estimating on a 6s. per ton rise for coal, we were doing it knowing that we were taking a very considerable risk in having underestimated the amount that we ought to put on, because the 6s. was arrived at after allowing full credit for about 1s. 4d. subsidy derived from our export trade.

The secretary of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain had issued a statement to the Press to the effect that the Coal Controller on June 3 estimated the output for the year 1919 at 230,606,000 tons, and the deficiency for the year ending December 1919, after providing the owners with a guarantee profit of 14 millions, at £36,900,000, and that this sum, spread over 230,606,000 tons output, equalled 3s. 2.4d. per ton, whereas Sir A. Geddes would increase the price to the consumer by 6s. per ton, even when advised that the arithmetical deficit was only 3s. 2.4d. Now, no part of that deficit of £36,900,000 so far had been raised from the price of coal; it had been met from the taxpayer or borrowed money. If we were to pay the whole of that £36,900,000 of this year, the increase in the price of inland coal on the remaining part of the year would have to be 9s. 2d. per ton. Another point which had been made strongly was that in the past there was an increase—described as a useless or unnecessary increase—in the price of coal of 2s. 6d., as a result of which the Government has been alleged to have made a large profit out of the coal industry. That transaction had not been fully understood. In the spring of 1918 it was ascertained that the Coal Mines Agreement Act was being worked at a loss, and the accounts up to March of 1918 showed a deficit at the rate of six millions per annum. In order to make the agreement self-supporting it was necessary to impose a charge of 2s. 6d. in June 1918. It had been said that the Government was profiteering out of the people of the country. Nothing of the sort; it was preventing international profiteering. The profits that were made out of the 2s. 6d. rise at that time were profits made from overseas. For example, we had during the war to get large quantities of goods from neutral countries for which high prices were asked, and in fact we got those goods by bartering coal, the only way that we could keep the price of those things which we were buying anything like reasonable was by charging, in the arrangements for barter, a larger sum for the coal. That was the source of the so-called profits. They were not profits in a sense, but they were going against what the Government was paying for stores in the war. These sums of money only passed as a matter of book-keeping through the coal industry, and on the international basis that money was absolutely required to meet our war charges accruing overseas. The actual arrangement, so far as the industry at home was concerned, was that after the half-crown was on there was 1s. 6½d. profit per ton of coal available for the mine owners in this country. The mass of money which passed through the coal industry—it was not taken from the coal industry, but passed through—at that time was altogether coming from outside the country, and was part of the general adjustments in connection with

international bargain. These possibilities of so-called profits no longer existed. We had not got the coal to export. Our ships would have to go out in ballast if they were to come back bringing iron ore, or whatever it might be in the way of raw material. If we had not exports to send out—and we should have few if coal, iron, and finished iron and steel were dear—the exchanges must go more against us, and we must be placed in a position of having to pay more for all our food. He would urge that the present was no time for any section of the community, or for the Government to think that its interests were separate from the interests of the whole lot. To get through the dark and anxious days which lay ahead we must get back to the spirit which we had during the war. It was no good anybody saying that anybody else especially was to blame, excepting on one thing, and there the blame was heavy if it could be proved in any way whatever. The men who were to blame at the present time were those who were not doing their best to get production, to get output, to get the cost of production down, by increasing its bulk.

Appeal to Miners' Leaders.

That at the present moment was the most urgent need of every department of our national life, and that was the point upon, which the miners, the actual workers in the mines, could do more to help the country than in any other way to get ahead, and whatever the other difficulties outside the industry might be, or of getting the coal away from the mines, let us see that the maximum amount of coal was got out of the mines that could be got. He would ask the leaders of the miners to go down to the men they know so well and say to them: "This is no time for doing less than the maximum you can do." He would ask the leaders of the other section of the community to say the same thing to their people; but, because coal was the basis and principal source of our power, its shortage, its dearthness, affected us more than the shortage or dearthness of any other thing except bread. Therefore he would ask every man who had influence with the miners, if they saw, as they must see, and know that many of the men who had the chance were not working, and many who had a limited chance were not working to the limit of their chance. If they would work to the limit of their capacity, then he had little fear that it could be possible for them soon to say: "The output is rising so well that we may run the risk of bringing down the price of coal." If the output went up, they would be only too glad and willing to meet the rising output by a fall in the price of coal. If the output could be got up, he thought he might say on behalf of the Government that as the output rose they would only be too glad to get the price of coal down 6d. a time, or some small amount, in order once again to get our industry freed and our export cheap. But unless we got coal, and unless everybody really would do all he could to get the output, and unless men of other industries would do all they could to free the circulation of goods in the country, to get up the supply of things required for the miners, there would be great difficulty. The key of the position, the final key, rested with the miners' not on any report, but by working.

Mr. Robert Bryce, of Toronto, is leaving for British Columbia. He will be away for about three weeks.