

A limited number of the soldier miners will be returning to their army units. Very shortly a considerable number of men ordinarily engaged in agriculture, but temporarily employed in coal mining, will be returning to the farms. That is the normal shift from agriculture to coal mining in western Canada. Each of these factors will have their influence on alleviating the difficulties being encountered at present, but probably these steps alone will not be sufficient to solve the entire problem.

The member for Bow River was apparently given to understand that men receiving only part-time employment are not permitted to seek other employment. That information is not correct. Through our regional superintendent at Winnipeg we issued instructions, some weeks ago, which had the effect of relaxing the freeze of employment in coal mining in the domestic coal fields. Local selective service offices in the areas affected have been instructed that, on request of an applicant who is not receiving at least four days' work per week and for whom there is not a vacancy in the bituminous fields, a permit may be granted to enter other high priority employment. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that we do not propose to freeze a man in employment in coal mining if he is not getting at least four days' work each week.

It was pointed out that we are importing coal from the United States into eastern Canada. That is quite so, and I would say that there are real and practical difficulties in the matter of making western coal available for consumption in the east. The principal difficulty is, of course, transportation. Our transportation facilities are now heavily taxed. I assure my hon. friend that we realize the seriousness of the present situation and that we are taking every possible step to relieve the situation as quickly as possible. It should be understood that transfers of men from one place of employment to another, perhaps a considerable distance away, does require some time. There are special difficulties involved in attempting to effect transfers of married persons with dependents. I should like to say also that care must be taken to assure that there is not too great a dispersal of miners from the area in question. We must bear in mind that we must produce coal for the winter of 1944-45. It may be that we shall not be as lucky next winter so far as weather is concerned.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): May I call the minister's attention to one fact arising out of the use of miners in this way? Under the regulations of the Department of National

[Mr. Mitchell.]

Defence a soldier released for mining duty is, I am informed, obliged to report at the end of a certain period, say six months, to be boarded again, if that is the right expression. It takes two months to get him boarded in and boarded back, and in the meantime his production is lost. That is the experience in the Minto area. Will the minister look into that?

Mr. BLACKMORE: May I ask the minister a supplementary question? As he read rather rapidly I am not sure I followed what he said. I gathered that he conveyed to the house the information that any miner who was not able to receive at least four days' work per week in the mines would be granted permission to take employment in some other high priority industry. Suppose he had not the opportunity to take employment in a high priority industry, but had an opportunity to take employment in another kind of industry, what would be the position?

Mr. MITCHELL: That would depend on the conditions in the particular locality to which the miner wanted to move. I would say that as soon as the snow goes away in Alberta one of the highest priority industries will be farming. There has always been a swing from coal mining to farming in the spring months, and I assume a large number of these men who normally go into the mines in the winter will go on the farms in the summer season.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK

PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL CREDIT FACILITIES FOR FIXED AND WORKING CAPITAL

Mr. D. C. ABBOTT (Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Finance) moved the second reading of bill No. 7, to incorporate the Industrial Development bank.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I regret, and I am sure the house regrets, that the Minister of Finance is not able to be here on the second reading of this important bill. He has to be in Washington this week, and is not in Florida, as reported in certain newspapers. The government is anxious that this bill should receive second reading and be sent to the banking and commerce committee as soon as possible.

As I said on the first reading, the introduction of this bill to provide for the establishment of an industrial development bank represents one part of the government's programme to prepare the way for a high level of employment and income after the war. In considering the present bill I