

when he asked certain questions of certain people. He asked one sugar man as to whether he had a combination with any other brother sugar man in regard to the prices they were to charge, and he found there was a combination, but he said that it faded away. Then he said that the retail coal dealers were not asking exorbitant prices for their coal. Did it never occur to my hon. friend that it was his duty and that of his colleagues in the Government much earlier in this war to allocate to their respective duties in this country those people who were engaged in performing definite services for the country? So far as coal is concerned, my hon. friend and his colleagues permitted recruiting sergeants to proceed into all of the coal mining districts of this country and take away from those coal mines the expert operators and the men who were able to produce that necessary and essential article which enters into the household life of every one in this northern country. They allowed recruiting to go on without paying any attention to the proper distribution of labour or the necessity of utilizing for the defence of the country those people who should go to the front. My hon. friend was a member of the Government which allowed 50,000 men to go to England who ought never to have gone there because they were medically unfit to fight, whereas had the Government paid any attention to looking after the national duty that each citizen of this country should have discharged, those men could have remained in peaceful occupation and assisted in the production of those articles that are essential to the well-being of the people. When my hon. friend tells the people that he has performed his duty by asking certain questions of certain people, and stopping there, his answer is not an efficient one and will not be so regarded. My hon. friend thinks his task is all performed; that there is nothing left for him to do. That is my hon. friend's position in regard to the matter. My hon. friend had an Order in Council passed. Occasionally we see these Orders in Council that are passed; there is a regular bureau of a political nature run by this Government under which announcements are made to the country through the Conservative press, but the last institution that this Government seems to think it necessary to consult respecting the interest of this country is this Parliament. We come down here after Parliament has sat for two or three months and have to request the Government to bring down and place upon the Table

important Orders in Council which they ought to bring down of their own volition. My hon. friend has thrown upon the municipalities the task of enforcing this Order in Council, which they have passed under the War Measures Act, an Act which gave the Government wider powers than have been taken by any other Government engaged in the war. Suppose my hon. friend saw fit to pass an Order in Council dealing with the question of recruiting, would not the whole country stand aghast if he left its enforcement to the municipal authorities? And yet that is what he did in regard to this question of the high cost of living, which, next to the task of winning the war, is daily becoming the most vital problem we have to solve. But my hon. friend thinks that he and his Government have performed their full duty when they have asked certain questions, and put up to a municipal body the responsibility of enforcing these provisions. I had expected that my hon. friend would tell the House that he had at least attempted to grapple with this question, but all he tells us is that he has satisfied himself that the retail coal dealers are not asking too much for coal; that the sugar combine faded away when he peered into it, and that he talked to some tannery about the cost of making leather. If my hon. friend thinks that that is doing his full duty to the people of this country under war conditions, I must tell him that he occupies a very ridiculous position before the people.

Mr. CROTHERS: I am afraid my hon. friend has never read the Order in Council. I will send him a copy of it to-morrow. My hon. friend is confusing matters. He started by accusing the Labour Department of not having done anything under this Order in Council, and he wound up by blaming the department for some recruiting that was done at the mines.

Mr. MACDONALD: I blame the whole Government for that. This question is too serious to quibble over. I pointed out that the whole trouble arose from the fact that the Government had not systematically allocated to the citizens of this country the various duties they should perform with a view to the winning of the war, that whilst it was desirable men should be recruited it was also necessary that work like coal mining should be carried on, that the Government had had no plan at all, and that hundreds of men had been allowed to go to the front who ought never to have left this country. In England, coal miners are