

to the speeches in this House dealing with Maritime rights, and I must confess that I do not yet know definitely just what Maritime rights are, nor do I know what legislation the Maritime righters require in order to have their claims satisfied. We are told of promises made when the Maritime provinces entered confederation; those promises, so far as I know, have been fulfilled. Then we are told of understandings reached between various parts of Canada at that time, and judging from some of the speeches there were some such understandings. If it is possible for the people of Canada to carry out not only those promises but the understandings as well, that should be done, but I believe we will know at those understandings and rights are reached though the commission appointed to inquire into this question. Surely that commission can bring recommendations to this House which will result in legislation to relieve, to some extent at all events, the people of the Maritimes.

It is claimed that immediate steps should be taken to encourage and foster the coal industry in the Maritimes. We expect the commission to go into that question and make recommendations, but I do not know whether the claims made for the Maritimes would be permanent solution of those difficulties. I hardly know whether sufficient stress has been placed on the condition of the coal industry, not only in the Maritimes but throughout the world.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): Would the hon. gentleman allow a question? Would he, as one of the representatives of western Canada, be in favour of giving the Maritime provinces freight rates on a parity with those fixed under the Crowsnest pass agreement and subsequent legislation?

Mr. BOTHWELL: If the Maritime provinces were placed in the same position as western Canada in connection with their shipments, I would be quite willing to concede them the same freight rates. I believe, however, that there is possibly a considerable difference, so far as shipments are concerned, between the Maritimes and western Canada. I think it would be the duty of this commission to inquire into this very matter.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): I would like to ask what difference there is. Is it not a question of getting the products to the markets?

Mr. BOTHWELL: There is a difference, as I see it. In spite of the quotations and citations made in this House to show that the rates on shipments of western grain to

the east occasion a loss to the railways, I believe—and in fact we know—that when great shipments of grain are moving east the railways are making their big profits, and I believe the grain coming from western Canada pays its way and leaves a reasonable return to the railways. If that commission finds, in studying Maritime conditions, that the freight rates from the Maritimes to central Canada should be reduced, I would say they should be reduced, and I believe there are two commissions inquiring into that matter at present.

I was speaking of the coal industry in Nova Scotia and the changing world conditions so far as coal is concerned. From the Daily Mail Year Book of 1926 I take the following statement, made by F. H. Rose, member of parliament for Aberdeen. He says:

It is difficult to conceive a more serious and thought-compelling prospect for a great industrial nation, than the chronic decline in one of its major activities and this we have to face and deal with. The facts are clear enough. Before the war, unemployment in the sense that it now exists was an unknown element in colliery work. Men were temporarily out of work through defects in their working places, odd individuals were employed for various personal reasons, but a mass of colliers without employers and without jobs was unknown. To-day there must be at least as many chronically unemployed as shown in the table appended.

I will not read the table. He goes on to say:

It is not without serious thought that I submit the proposition that the coal trade is declining, and it will continue to decline as years go on, until it ceases to be major industry—here and elsewhere in the world. For the phenomena of a current transition are apparent all over the world. The rapid development of the motorship and the motor tractor are not entirely accountable for the conditions. The use of hydro-electricity by Italy and the Scandinavian nations has closed or is closing our middle coal markets (our distant markets were never very important). Our iron and steel manufactures are steadily passing from coke to electricity and their processes. Every effort of the modern scientist and inventor is directed now to economizing coal and the production of cheaper and cleaner and vastly more effective agencies for raising power, light and heat.

The effect of these innovations bears so heavily upon the industrial and social life of our people that an industrial writer may well be excused for emphasizing it. No reflective person can avoid the inevitable implications which arise from its consideration and the simple fact is that the world is using less coal to-day than it used yesterday and will be using less to-morrow than to-day. It is superfluous to stress the importance to our nation of a declining industry or its bearing upon the questions of unemployment and our social life.

Now, just what the situation is in the Maritimes so far as the coal industry is concerned, having regard to that portion of Mr. Rose's address which I have read, I do not know, but I am prepared to say,—and I believe I am speaking for western members generally when I make the statement—that