

*Fuel Supply*

their powers and to exercise the functions which they should discharge themselves. Had I received anything like reasonable support when I discussed this question before something might have been done.

Now there is no necessity whatever for a committee to inquire into the sources of supply in Canada, for we all know what they are. The government do not need any advice at all upon that subject. I would urge the deputy leader of the House from Brandon (Mr. Forke) and the vice-regent from Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Woodsworth) to try if possible to get the government moving in this matter and to shoulder the responsibility that properly belongs to them. There is no reason why the country should suffer because of inaction on the part of the government. The matter has now been made a football for long enough. One commission, the railway commission, failed to act on its own volition until instructed by parliament, and their report will not be in until midsummer and will be of little or no value to end or solve the question. The appointment of a committee only gives the government a chance to shelve its responsibility with regard to a situation that will become very acute next winter. The resolution just mentions sources of supply and says nothing at all about Alberta, the Maritimes or transportation.

As I said on March 15 last, in the debate of 1924, a vote was taken and my resolution for a national coal supply was adopted.

Where are we going to be next fall if the coal strike in England continues for six months or a year; are we going to be frozen? On the government of the day, Mr. Speaker, as long as they are the government, is the responsibility for finding a solution of this question. I do urge on the government that this industry is in such a critical condition to-day in the Maritimes and in the west that we should adopt the principle of subventions, bonuses and subsidies, a good protectionist doctrine, and put the industry on its feet. While I have the utmost regard for the mover of the resolution, I fear its adoption would mean further delay, and the only tangible result would be the presentation and filing of another report to supplement these two reports that I hold in my hand. Sir Henry Thornton agreed to a seven dollar rate, but later he said conditions had changed and he withdrew that rate. To hear him making his pronouncements on railway matters, you would think he was superior to the railway commission and even to parliament. Again, Mr. Speaker, I urge the government to take immediate action so that this very serious

[Mr. Church.]

situation may be dealt with in time to save the people of Canada, particularly those residing in the central provinces, from all the misery and discomfort that must inevitably follow another shortage of fuel next winter.

Hon. CHARLES STEWART (Minister of the Interior): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend from Toronto Northwest (Mr. Church) always seeks an opportunity to make a speech when the question of coal comes before this House.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: He needs to.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): Does he? I have not noticed recently anything serious in the coal situation, with all respect to my hon. friend from West York (Sir Henry Drayton). What is proposed to be investigated by this committee is not the situation that was dealt with by the committee of which my hon. friend from Toronto Northwest has just spoken. There is no need to investigate sources of supply; we all know where these are available. But some members of this House, particularly those from the province of Ontario are interested in securing coal from the west, and naturally hon. members from Alberta desire to supply the fuel necessities of Ontario from the coal mines of their province. To bring this about, it was advocated by some of our Ontario members that transportation could be reversed on the Great Lakes; in other words, that the coal be brought down to Fort William, and there transhipped to bottoms which would carry the coal to the lake ports from which in turn it could be distributed to the southeastern portion of this province. That phase of the subject was not investigated thoroughly by the previous committee. I do not see any advantage in investigating the whole problem of coal transportation, because that has been already very fully gone into and the results, as my hon. friend stated, are contained in the volume he held in his hand. But it is felt by some members who are interested in this matter that they can prove the practicability of cheapening transportation costs on Alberta coal by transhipping it at Fort William as I have already mentioned. The work of this committee will not interfere in the slightest degree with the movement of coal to supply next winter's requirements of the central provinces. We are well aware of what the strike in Great Britain may mean to our fuel situation, but we are chiefly interested in supplying the central provinces with our own coal, and the government is quite alive to the whole problem.