

SHOULD INVESTIGATE FUEL RESOURCES

Further Comments of the Press Regarding Important National Problem

Nova Scotia has more than 10,500,000,000 tons of bituminous coal, New Brunswick 161,000,000 tons, Ontario has a small quantity of lignite, Quebec and Prince Edward Island have none. The western provinces have many billion tons of lignite, and Alberta has in addition to lignite 845,900,000 tons of semi-anthracite, 218,000,000 tons of bituminous and well up to 1,000,000,000,000 of sub-bituminous. British Columbia has nearly 80,000,000,000 tons of bituminous coal. Besides lignite and sub-bituminous coal there are reserves in Canada of 313,000,000 tons of bituminous and 845,900,000 semi-anthracite coal, although a small part of this lying in remote and frigid regions may not prove available. The peat bogs of Canada are estimated to produce 28,000,000,000 tons equal in fuel properties to 16,000,000,000 tons of good coal. With these resources, can we not by investigation and application solve our fuel problem in Canada? Mr. Arthur V. White, the consulting engineer, who has made a study of this subject and who has contributed several valuable articles to *The Monetary Times* regarding it, said in our issue of January 4th last;—

"Canadians need never expect to have electrical energy replace coal and other fuel for heating purposes except to a relatively limited extent. We must direct ourselves to the development of our coal resources."

No Abuse of Assets

"By intelligent and thrifty use, the natural resources of Canada may beneficently serve the needs of a large population," says the *Daily Record*, Niagara Falls. "If, however, Canadians become really dependent upon necessary commodities supplied them by other countries, they must be prepared to accept the circumstances in which they may suddenly find themselves if the supply of such commodities is cut off. Such circumstances will be aggravated by any abuse of our assets."

Commenting upon Mr. White's statement that the supply of coal is far from being inexhaustible in the United States and that we may naturally expect to be obliged in the near future to depend on our own resources, the *Electrical News*, of Toronto, says:—"In other words, the temporary crisis of the past month will become a permanent condition, the solution of which must rest with ourselves. In that sense our troubles might prove to have been a blessing in disguise if they succeeded in impressing upon us the necessity of getting ready for that inevitable event of which we can now, from our recent experience, form some reasonable estimate. How soon that may be is problematical. Our neighbors to the south have been tremendously 'white' during the crisis just passed, but let us not forget that their resources are limited, and that charity begins at home. The necessity to withhold export to Canada may arise sooner than they, or we, expect. For a permanent crisis, such as we have just had a taste of, and which may come to-morrow, shall the people of Canada not do well to hold themselves in readiness, so far as is humanly possible, by conserving for our own people the heritage Providence has willed us?"

Demands National Action

"When coal is so scarce and heat becomes so dear, would it not be possible for inventive genius and enterprise to utilize our waste, our refuse, and make it a benefit, instead of a costly nuisance to remove?" asks the Peterborough *Evening Examiner*. "The whole fuel problem of Canada demands national action, and the more so that the problem can be solved," it adds. "This is shown by the conclusions of an article contributed to *The Monetary Times* by Mr. A. V. White. This war has worked revolutionary conditions in all arenas of national, domestic, and individual life, and necessity compels us to face new conditions with adequate measures for meeting them."

"The lesson of the present fuel shortage will be lost upon us if it does not at once stir us into action to guard ourselves against such a state of affairs in future winters," is the reminder given by the *Toronto Mail and Empire*, which continues:—"It is not enough that it steels us to bear the cold with more stoicism, that it drives us to makeshifts to warm ourselves, or even to panicky measures to obtain coal. It ought to have the effect of stimulating us to immediate and untiring activity to lay in an adequate fuel supply for next winter. Once we get out of the clutches of zero weather and

feel the genial warmth of a forward spring, we tend to forget our worries about fuel and to give rein to the old happy-go-lucky propensity. Governments are not freer from this weakness than is the average citizen. It is necessary to make the utmost out of the pains and privations and haunting experience of others' miseries the present coal shortage is bringing us. That ought to be enough to impel public opinion and public authority upon a strong campaign to solve next winter's fuel problem in advance.

"The task of government is to devise the policy and make the transportation arrangements for distributing the fuel, and in this task Mr. White considers the provincial governments should co-operate with the federal government. When the season of navigation opens none of the vessels coming up the St. Lawrence should lack cargo. Now that the government has control of the Canadian Northern Railway it can supply the railway connection that may be necessary to forward Nova Scotia coal into the heart of Ontario. Many of the smaller vessels can come right into the lakes from Cape Breton ports, and there will be no trouble finding cargo to carry back. There is still a large reserve of fuel in the woods of Old Ontario. Labor can be got by co-operation among neighbors to cut up into cordwood or stove lengths the fallen and dead trees that are a fire risk to the forest. These are matters which the government should give immediate and thorough attention, and plan to direct the carriers and the workers accordingly."

Government Has Information

Quoting Mr. White's statement that there is no need to start again learning the A.B.C. of this fuel problem, the *London (Ont.) Advertiser* reminds us that "full information is in possession of the government. To carry out measures of relief and to place Canada in a reasonably independent position will take time, but under proper direction the country can be relieved of a menace which threatens not only her economic life, but the physical life and well-being of a large proportion of her population."

The *Vancouver Daily Sun* says:—"There is plenty of peat and lignite on the prairie districts as well as in the east. Mr. White points to his moral by calling attention to the price of coal in France and Italy, where it is \$50 a ton, and he remarks that an advance of even ten dollars a ton over present prices in this country would cost the people an extra \$50,000,000 of yearly outlay. From this, he draws the conclusion that a million dollars, or even a few millions of dollars if necessary, placed at the disposal of technical officers assisted by men of sound commercial judgment, in order to get Canada's lignite and peat resources under national development 'constitutes so intrinsically small a sum in comparison to the results as to be practically unworthy of debate.' No doubt Mr. White is entirely in the right. The subject is one with which the Dominion government should busy itself without delay. The amount of money required is insignificant in comparison with the benefits to be obtained."

Must Furnish Solution

"It is scarcely necessary at the present time to emphasize the importance of the fuel problem," says the *Woodstock Sentinel-Review*, "but the lessons of the present winter, severe as they are, will be lost unless they lead to some definite action to furnish a solution. It is for the purpose of drawing public attention to the real nature of the problem and of pointing the way to a solution that Mr. White's article has been written. The conclusion of the whole matter is that there is no need for Canada with her vast resources of fuel and water-power to go cold, or to have her industries checked by lack of power; but she may expect serious times ahead unless every effort possible is put forth, without too much delay, to deal with the situation in a comprehensive way. Mr. White has rendered a valuable public service by drawing attention to this problem at this time."

WHEAT VIA PANAMA CANAL

Vancouver's first bulk shipment of grain has arrived safely at a British port. A steamer which was loaded at the government elevator in Vancouver early in November with 100,000 bushels of wheat from the prairies made the journey safely to the United Kingdom, via the Panama Canal, and now word is awaited anxiously as to the condition in which the grain in this test shipment reached its destination.

The shipment was accompanied by Mr. A. W. Alcock, of Winnipeg, grain expert and assistant chemist of the Canadian Board of Grain Commissioners, who is to observe the condition of the grain at all stages of the voyage.