

*Coal and Steel Industry*

were able to show a considerable increase in the number of men who were willing and eager to earn a livelihood in the coal industry. In 1919, which is the earliest year of these records, the number of wage earners on the books of the coal mining industry was 1,170,000. By 1941, which you will recollect was a war period, it had been reduced to 697,600. In 1946, which was a year after the war, a year of demobilization, the figure was 696,700. But in 1947, the first year in which the government went into business and operated the coal industry in the interests of the people of Britain and in the interests of her economy, we find that the number of men engaged in the coal industry had risen to 711,400. In 1948, the latest figure, the figure had risen again to 722,500.

Under this system which is now being operated successfully and at a profit for the first time this year, the national industry has acceded to the miners' justifiable demands for a five-day week. The acceptance of this demand was, however, a major factor for breaking records of the mines. Obviously if the mines cannot be operated economically and profitably under private business, where mines are owned individually or in small groups, the obvious savings of grouping all the mines together make it possible for raising the standard of living of those who are engaged in mine work, and make it possible to make the conditions of work much lighter and much more attractive.

The output per average worker under nationalized, socialized, government-owned mining increased considerably since the government took over. In 1942, the output was 1.05 tons per man shift. In 1943 it had gone down to 1.03 tons. In 1944 it was down to 1.00 tons per manshift. In 1945 it was 1.00 tons. In 1947, when the government had been operating those mines for one year, the output had risen to 1.07 tons and in 1948 it had risen to 1.10 tons per manshift. Immediate increases were shown the moment the men who worked in the mines felt that they were getting a square deal from the people who were operating the mines, and thought that they were contributing to the use value of society as a whole.

Here is an argument for the sake of the government. The argument that is being continuously brought up is that the socialization of any industry is going to remove initiative; that once you remove initiative, you will not get production; and once you do not get production, our country will go bankrupt. Here is the answer to that argument. Initiative is based upon the feeling that you are doing something useful, that you are appreciated, and that you are getting your just dues for your labour. That type of initiative

[Mr. Young.]

means production. The British have found that out. We are always, it seems, thirty years behind the British in finding things out.

When I was in the army in the recent war I found that we were operating under rules which were by no means up to the standard of the modern British army. I found that we were operating under the rules of 1914-18. Should we have the misfortune of having another war no doubt we shall find that the rules of the British army are thirty years ahead, as they are in most other things. That is no excuse for us to continue doing as we have done in the past. If other people can be progressive, or if other people can recognize the economic facts of life, then we in Canada can recognize the economic facts of life.

We have a vast potential of natural resources out in the province of British Columbia. We have—and I say this advisedly because it was always the case out there—an annual outbreak of unemployment in British Columbia. We have there the resources and the manpower; but we have the situation of capital being unwilling or unable to come in and take advantage of those factors, and the economy of the country as a whole suffers as a consequence of these facts. I would suggest to the government that here is an excellent way in which they can get ready, before the changed circumstances in the next few years, and possibly the change in their own status. The newspapers are saying that there will be a provincial election in British Columbia in June of this year. Should the government continue to hesitate, British Columbia will have a socialist government before this government goes out of power, in which case there will be an opportunity there for the government to experiment. I am sure that a socialist government in British Columbia would be happy to co-operate in any plan that this government may have to offer to develop the coal and steel industry and to provide employment for our people in the lower mainland of British Columbia.

**Mr. Abbott:** I wonder whether I may be permitted to express the hope at this stage that today's grievances are almost exhausted, or if they are not that they could be canvassed another time. I say that in order to permit me to get interim supply through before half past ten. I did speak to the leaders of the parties yesterday and explained that I hoped to get interim supply today so that I could get the supply bill through and have it voted in ample time for the first of the year. It has taken a bit longer than usual. I do not want to interrupt the hon. member for Qu'Appelle, but it takes ten or fifteen minutes to go through the necessary routine.