

Hon. Mr. Drury, in a letter dated February 24, wrote:

I am in receipt of your letter of the 21st instant, in which you ask whether the manufacture of alcohol for mechanical purposes is to be permitted in Ontario in the future. I am not aware that this is a matter on which the provincial legislature has any control or jurisdiction. So far as my advice goes, the matter is entirely within the purview of the Parliament of Canada.

A very large source of alcohol lies in grain—corn, potatoes, etc.—and the alcohol thus produced is the drinkable liquor, which constitutes by far the greater portion of all alcohol used for industrial purposes. At the present time it is shipped to Ottawa to be denatured: That is to say, it is so poisoned as to be unfit for drinking purposes. In other words, it is methylated. Having been rendered unfit as potable liquor it is despatched to the various users who employ it as they see fit. Heretofore industrial alcohol has been so expensive in the production as to have been practically out of the question. Its universality, of course, at once appeals to the whole industrial world, and industrial chemists everywhere have been bending their energies to find some solution of the difficulty with regard to price. This difficulty decreased with the rise in the price of the rival of alcohol, namely gasoline. It was found possible in the course of time to manufacture industrial alcohol at a price that put it on a par with gasoline; and now, owing to the scarcity of gasoline and its consequent high price, alcohol has come into the market. The price of alcohol has been going down, while the cost of gasoline has been going up. Alcohol will really be the source of energy of the future, and the National Council of Industrial Research has consequently appealed to the Government to effect, if possible, an increase in the natural sources of alcohol, such as corn, potatoes, etc. It is not necessary that these products should be all of the highest quality, but they must be that from which can be secured all the alcohol, and therefore all the energy, we need, without fear of exhaustion. So long as there is seed-time and harvest, so long will there be a source of alcohol and a source of energy which we can utilize. While this may have seemed for a time largely fanciful, it is now well within the realm of practicability. We know this on the authority of our scientific men, who are the only persons that are really capable of expressing an opinion on the subject. And in Canada, which at last has reached that stage of civilization in which the people are able to appreciate that form

[Mr. Burnham.]

of organized or systematized knowledge, known as science, we are prepared at least to investigate, and probably to adopt, in very many particulars, the recommendations of scientific men.

They have control of heating; they have control of industry, they have suggested means to us now for increasing our power over nature and our resistance to climatic change as well as our ability to generate domestic heat. These things being so it is only for us to open our mind and receive the information which is now of a certain and undebatable character so that we may make use of it. And let me say, Mr. Speaker, that it does not do for the members of Parliament of Canada at any time to shrug their shoulders and wait for somebody else, or some other body, to take up these questions, because it is from the Parliament of Canada that the people expect all advances in this particular. The people of Canada expect that Parliament will look after their public affairs and rescue them from anarchy, scarcity, deficiency and weakness of every kind. It is therefore our duty to take advantage of the advice of experts and to see to it that we place in an organized way before the people all means of energy for their use, especially such forms of energy as are practically within our reach at the present time.

The struggle for existence is such that it never really changes. It is always a struggle for enough to eat, for sufficient clothing, for a place to live, and for those general requirements with which we are familiar. What is the function of Government? All the authorities, and there are many, clearly indicate that the function of government is to protect the individual—to protect the liberties of the individual from the encroachments of one another, and of the State, and to so guide and order the affairs of the people that they will all co-ordinate and reciprocate to the end that there will not be confusion, strife, discontent or suffering.

The idea that a government should keep the balance between the taxes collected from the people and the amount paid in, and that was all they had to do, is, in a country as large as Canada, entirely erroneous. It might do in some small country, or in some country where they have not reached that stage of ambition which would prompt them to greater effort, intellectually and otherwise. What is it that has made France great? Her chemistry. What is it that made Germany once great? Her chemistry and chemistry only. What is that is making England great? Her chemistry. We see