

readily increased to meet any demand. In spite of the duty of 75 cents per ton, a considerable quantity of this coal is sent across the American border, as none equally good is easily obtainable from American sources. Should the duty be removed, the Lethbridge coal would find a large American market in the mining country to the south, while supplying all the needs of the surrounding prairie regions. The Lethbridge coal is used all along the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway as far as Winnipeg, and even beyond to Port Arthur, where it begins to meet the competition of Pennsylvanian coal brought up the Lakes.

Eastward from Lethbridge, and reaching along the American boundary to the borders of Manitoba, are coal measures which have been estimated by Dr. Dawson to cover 15,000 square miles. The coal hitherto obtained is not of the best quality, and many of the seams consist mainly of lignite. They lie quite near the surface and are easily worked. In special localities the quality may improve. I visited the newly-opened mines at Estevan, about 325 miles from Winnipeg. The early product of the mines was not very satisfactory, as the coal, which locked well when it came out of the mine, crumbled after exposure to the air. Deeper mining is expected to produce better results. At the worst, however, Southern Manitoba and Assiniboia are assured of an abundance of cheap fuel, which will meet the necessities of the farming population. Outcrops are met with in many places, and as railways are pushed forward new mines will be opened.

When we go northward to the Saskatchewan a striking illustration of the abundance of coal in this district is furnished by the thick seams which are visible all along the banks of that river in the vicinity of Edmonton. A service-

able domestic coal is delivered in Edmonton and at most points of the country around for about 10s. per ton. A combine of the mines about the time I was there to raise the price to 13s. or 14s. per ton was met by a threat on the part of the consumers to mine their own coal, as numbers of the farmers could easily do on their own land. At this town, which seems from the distance of England to be on the very frontiers of civilization, it was interesting to observe that not only the streets, but the shops and private houses were brilliantly illuminated by the electric light, cheaply obtained by the use of coal which can be mined almost at the door of the engine room. The coal-beds of the Saskatchewan extend far down that river, and will in due time be reached by the railway, which is already extended to Prince Albert. We may, therefore, say that the whole great central prairie region of North-Western Canada is encompassed by accessible deposits of fairly good coal. Still further northwards they have been explored far into the valley of the Peace river, where they await and make possible the advance of settlement. It seems scarcely necessary to draw the conclusions suggested by this statement of Canada's supplies of coal, and especially of those on the eastern and western coasts, directly connected with the maritime position of the Empire. People who talk lightly of the possibility of Canada's becoming independent or of her annexation to the United States, by either of which changes her ports would become closed to British ships in times of war, have reflected little upon the conditions which determine national safety, under modern naval arrangements, for a great commercial people. When we estimate the commercial stake which British people have upon the North Atlantic and upon the Pacific, and when we consider that