

I wish now to deal for a few minutes with the fuel shortage which exists in British Columbia.

We have had one of the most severe fuel shortages that have ever beset our people, as will be seen from the following brief paragraph in this article:

Harassed with cold homes, sick children and frozen water pipes, men and women lined two and three deep before the fuel board office of the Wartime Prices and Trade Board on West Pender Monday afternoon, in a desperate "last hope" to obtain fuel—any kind of fuel just so long as it would burn.

I do not want anyone to think for a moment that I am sniping at the chairman of the wartime prices and trade board, but he went to Vancouver recently and the general statements he made in connection with the fuel situation were in my opinion uncalled for. He wondered what sort of people they were who could not go out and cut fuel for themselves, and he intimated that if he were placed in a similar position he knew what he would do. I need not point out, if he had made the same statement in Ottawa, how foolish it would have seemed, because the people in the city of Vancouver could not go nineteen and twenty miles and cut fuel for themselves and bring it in. As a matter of fact, a great many of them did help themselves, because I have pictures of men sawing up their garden fences, parts of their garages and even part of the furniture in their home in order to obtain fuel—and yet all they get is a statement of that sort from the head of the board. I wonder why he did not investigate the closing down of two lumber mills in British Columbia when lumber was in great demand and when the people could not get fuel. I say to the board that if they really want to do the people a service they should find out why these two mills were bought and closed and hundreds of men thrown out of employment.

Mr. MacINNIS: Private enterprise. That is what the members to my right want. The hon. member should come over here with us.

Mr. REID: I think I am safer here. I see my time is up, but before I sit down I would ask the government to take special note of the fuel situation, which is really serious, and also the fact that on the coast cargo ships being built for the United States government have been changed recently from coal burners to oil burners. We might have had a small tanker to supply our people with fuel. At any rate the conditions are such as to warrant something more definite and satisfactory being done for our people than simply the uttering of a lot of words.

[Mr. Reid.]

I am sorry, sir, that my time is up.

Mr. J. A. ROSS (Souris): I agree with a great many of the remarks which have just been made by the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Reid). I have a copy of the Beveridge report, much of which I have read, and I should like to recommend, as he did, that every member of the House of Commons study the report in detail. The hon. member pointed out that Britain is now producing fifty per cent of her foodstuffs. I suggest that her goal for 1943 is a production of over seventy-five per cent of her foodstuff requirements. I agree with the hon. member that the time has come in Canada for the appointment of a food ministry; in fact that time is long past. This is very essential.

I was greatly disappointed to find that the speech from the throne does not contain any constructive suggestions for the proper allocation of man-power or for assistance to Canadian agriculture in these distressing times. One paragraph in the speech from the throne states that a joint committee representative of the departments of agriculture of Canada and the United States has been agreed upon to co-ordinate the efforts of the two countries in the production of food for the united nations. That is all to the good, but there is no mention of bringing about parity prices as between the producers of the two countries. Further on, this statement appears in the speech from the throne:

My ministers have already begun to explore the international agreements and domestic measures which will help to secure adequate incomes for primary producers and full employment after the war.

They have only begun to study these conditions in this the fourth year of the war. Again:

My ministers believe that a comprehensive national scheme of social insurance should be worked out at once which will constitute a charter of social security for the whole of Canada. The government accordingly proposes to recommend the early appointment of a select committee to examine and report on the most practicable measures of social insurance, and the steps which will be required to ensure their inclusion in a national plan.

This charter of social security comes apparently as a result of the convention held in Winnipeg last December. It has all the earmarks of it. In that respect, notwithstanding the views expressed by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) the other evening in this house as to the composition of his cabinet from the point of view of occupational representation, may I say that the election of the Hon. John Bracken to the leadership of the Progressive Conservative party is regarded