

Mr. GRAYDON: Did my hon. friend say something about running out? I do not know whether I heard him or not—he was whispering pretty loud—but I thought I heard him say something about running out. On that point, may I say that the sessional paper filed will show whether he ran out or not, because the deputy minister himself said:

We sincerely regret we are unable to assist you in this matter.

He is writing to the coal administrator.

However, Doctor Smith's background and recent experience particularly qualify him for the position which he will be assuming immediately with this department.

Mr. GOLDING: I hope the hon. member is satisfied now.

Mr. MITCHELL: I know the hon. member will agree with me that in my position as minister I cannot go into all the ramifications of the organization; but this might be truthfully said about the individual referred to, that he was offered a position of some responsibility and he did not stay with the ship. Let us be frank and honest about the matter. When my hon. friend speaks about experts in selective service, it may be said that prior to the outbreak of the war, or prior to a year ago, there were very few persons whom one might term experts in selective service. So far as the north American continent is concerned, the direction of human beings as free people is a virgin field. Let me say, however, frankly that notwithstanding all the criticism, I think our people have in a very large measure lived up to their responsibilities. I have been in countries where dictatorships have existed, where a man had to have a card with his finger-prints on it, his photograph and signature, and even under such conditions—I speak of course merely from observation, having had some experience in travelling in many countries—I believe that our people generally have done a better job than the people in the dictator countries. And they are doing just as good a job as the people in Great Britain.

My hon. friend speaks of permanence in the system we have for placing these various classes in industry and commerce within the compulsory orders. It is fundamental and axiomatic that you cannot overload the machine too soon. This machine has been taking care of the placement of nearly a million and a half people in the last year, and placements on a voluntary basis can be much more easily undertaken than when you have to give direction. I hope it will be said, I am sure it will be said when this war is over, that we have the same basis of voluntary movement as they have in Great

Britain in proportion to the number of people moved. As time goes on, I look for an increase in the tempo of these compulsory orders. I think that is inevitable under present circumstances.

Might I say in passing that last night when I said that we were getting to the bottom of the keg, I meant it in the sense that it affects the age groups that we have already called up for military service, and my hon. friend will agree with me that when there has been the tremendous expansion which we have had in industry, where at the outbreak of the war we had to all intents and purposes no ship-building industry at all, whereas to-day we have over 100,000 people engaged in that activity, and in the production of aeroplanes, guns and all those necessities, it is inevitable that we shall have difficulties with labour supply. We shall have the same kind of difficulties they are experiencing in Great Britain and at the moment in the United States, as well as in New Zealand, Australia and South Africa. But I am not afraid of our people; I am not afraid of production on the farm front. Given the right kind of weather, I think our farmers will produce as much as they did last year and probably more; but I wish to give this warning, that I shall not be held responsible for the weather by the opposition or by anyone on the government side.

Mr. GRAYDON: You have exonerated yourself on that score before.

Mr. MITCHELL: I want to make it clear. There are one or two spots that are very difficult and grave. I hope, in the course of the next two or three days, to have something to say about coal. Of all problems confronting my department, that is the most important and vital in Canada. One can cut down on the family table, but one has to keep warm; and as I said the other evening, when you reflect that this nation is not self-supporting in regard to coal but is on an import basis, the situation will be realized. This year we have to import, in addition to our own production, 23,000,000 tons of coal. That is a lot of coal. No one can predict what will be the condition in the coal industry in the United States, and I think we might very well assume that if they run into difficulties to the south of us the supply of this country will, in the very nature of things, have to suffer. That is why I would plead with everyone in this house, whether he be a trade unionist, a miner or an employer, having some influence on coal production in Canada, that he lend every effort to see that coal production is not only maintained but increased.