

## COAL INTEREST.

It is to be regretted that the bill reported by the committee does not provide for the free exportation and importation of coal. I sincerely hope it will be amended in this particular. My anxiety for this amendment does not arise simply from the fact that the shipping interest of the Lakes desires the profits of the trade, nor merely from my conviction that it will directly promote the general interests of the country; but also from the fact, which is or which ought to be perfectly understood, that without this provision for free trade in coal, our proposed reciprocity will not be accepted by the Provincial Parliament. To obtain a market for this coal is the principal object with Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and the only consideration that will induce them to concede to us the benefits of their coast fisheries.

At present, Pennsylvania almost monopolizes the coal trade of the country. That State sells some five millions of tons annually, at a cost to consumers of \$20,000,000. It is not, therefore, surprising that the coal interest there should resist the free importation of coals from Nova Scotia, where they are found in great abundance and of excellent quality. It may, however, be seriously doubted whether the coal interest of Pennsylvania has anything to fear from free trade in this article; though if it has, it is just as certain that other important interests of that great State would be proportionately promoted.

The coal imported from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick is highly bituminous, some of it containing as much as sixty per cent. of volatile matter. Such coal as this can never come into competition with the anthracite of Pennsylvania. The latter will always be preferred for domestic and some other purposes; and in confirmation of this, I may refer to the fact that the British Cunard steamers, which stop at Halifax, do not and cannot use the Nova Scotia coal, but obtain the coal they use from Pennsylvania, though at a much higher price. It is also equally notorious that all the anthracite in Pennsylvania would not make gas enough to supply the city of Philadelphia for a single evening; nor from the Cumberland coal can gas be made, without the admixture of some more bituminous variety. Free trade in coal will therefore result in the exportation of Pennsylvania coals, to be used for purposes to which they are best adapted, and in the importation of coals from the Provinces, to be used for the special purposes to which they are suited. It is also true that an increased consumption of anthracite will, to some extent, take place, for it is known that some factories in the East are now lying idle, because they cannot, without paying a high duty, obtain a certain amount

of Pictou coal, which they find it beneficial to use in connection with that from Pennsylvania. Such is the difference in the qualities of these coals, and so different the purposes for which each is especially adapted, that Pennsylvania and Nova Scotia can scarcely come into direct competition. But the Liverpool coal, which more closely resembles that from Nova Scotia, will suffer more by this competition, and must ultimately be driven from our market.

The importance of the Western coal trade can scarcely have been taken into consideration by those representing the coal interest here. This is already of great consequence, but it is speedily destined to be immensely increased. Our Lake trade now employs about seventy-four thousand tons of steam vessels, mostly using coal, and the whole of the Canadas are entirely destitute of the article; so that Toronto and other growing cities will be compelled to obtain their supplies from the western part of Pennsylvania and from Ohio. The demand in this direction will be an equivalent for any competition or diminution of demand in the Eastern cities.

Pennsylvania is also largely engaged in the manufacture of iron; this is, in fact, her especial manufacturing interest. The iron manufacturers are now compelled to compete with those of England at a great disadvantage, not only on account of the difference in the price of labor, but also on account of the difference in the price of coal. In England, iron can be afforded cheap, mainly because, in many localities, the iron and coal, and a clay suitable for fire-bricks, and of which furnaces can be built, are found in alternate layers; it therefore costs nothing to bring the iron and coal together. Should, therefore, the introduction of coal from the British Provinces have the effect to reduce the price of coals, as some suppose, it will in the same ratio increase the profits of the ironmasters. The manufacturers of the East are also equally interested with the iron men in obtaining cheap fuel.

But there is another consideration which, of itself, ought to be conclusive in favor of free trade in this article. Fuel is about as much a necessary of life as food; and for those that live in the great Atlantic cities, coal is fast becoming the only fuel. Now, the question is, shall we, by legislation preventing competition, compel the millions who want coal, and must have it, to pay an extra and exorbitant price, in order that a few brokers, owning coal stocks, may realize enormous profits? At this age of the world, will a monopoly, which bears with such crushing weight on the working classes, longer be tolerated? I think not. And I believe I may safely leave this matter, and proceed to speak of the lumber interest.

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