

explosion seventy-six men lost their lives on one level, only one man out of seventy-seven coming out alive. I am not saying that at all in derogation of what the brave miners did in rescuing Doctor Robertson and Mr. Scadding at Moose River, and I should like to congratulate these two gentlemen on their fortitude and their great nerve control under such trying conditions. I should like also to condole with Mrs. Magill. I think we can look upon the action of the miners at Moose River as typical of the actions of all miners throughout Canada. Take them as a pattern of the miners throughout our whole country, protagonists in the reign of right over might. That is how I feel those miners would wish their actions to be construed. If we wish to measure accurately the deed they performed, we must study their background, the conditions under which they lived during this period of time, to use a term which seems to have endeared itself to the leader of the opposition (Mr. Bennett) in this house. Ever since the late government came into power in 1930 the miners of Nova Scotia, yes, and of eastern Canada—I represent about one-third of the total number of bituminous coal miners in the Dominion of Canada—have been working on short time, their wages hardly, if at all sufficient to meet their ordinary expenses and enable them to keep their families in good condition and get sufficient of this world's goods to give them a decent living. It was under such conditions that those men displayed such fortitude, such courage and such persistence, without any thought of pay, because pay was not in their minds at all when they attempted the rescue. They had made up their minds to rescue those entombed men, whether dead or living. That was the motive behind their efforts and their tenacity of purpose. Somebody needed succour, and they were going to go through and rescue those men dead or alive in spite of every obstacle which might be imposed by man or nature.

I do not wish to be considered parochial, and I am not talking, I assure you, Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of the constituents back home, but there has been so much talk in this house on the budget and on various other matters, some academic, some problematical, and some prophetic—you would think some hon. gentlemen were possessed of occult powers the way they can tell us what is going to happen in the future—that to-day I would like to bring to the attention of the government and of Canada the condition in which our coal miners have been existing during the past five years especially. I assure you, Mr. Speaker, that I shall not trespass on the generosity of the house by dwelling too long on the subject of the coal miners.

They are a unit in our national life; they are nationals. The first duty of Canada or of any other country is to protect its nationals. That is why we have embassies and protective systems. The miners of Canada are nationals of Canada, and under the British North America Act they have rights and privileges just the same as any other group. We want no more than what is our due, but we expect no less.

Our total imports of coal amount to 13,000,000 tons and we mine a total of 6,500,000 tons in our eastern provinces. Under these conditions there is no excuse for any one of the 30,000 miners to have to go hungry or without the necessities of life. There is something wrong in our national make-up when the people of Canada are ready to tolerate such conditions in one of our basic industries. You cannot blame the miner if at times he is driven to wondering whether there is any equity or fairness in the government when such conditions of affairs are allowed to persist. We import a total of 13,000,000 tons of coal, but when these miners come to Ottawa or to any other source of authority in an effort to expand their trade, they are met with the answer that it is economically not feasible. If it is not economically feasible to sell our coal in Canada, is it economically feasible to permit a group of nationals to exist on one day's work per week, as has been the case for the last number of years?

This is what is happening and yet government ships are bunkered with imported coal. The Canadian National Railways, our own railway system, a system which should be working in the interests of the people of Canada, is actually working coal mines in the United States. The coal miners in Nova Scotia or in Canada have no objection to the coal mined in the United States being used on the American lines of our system, but they have a definite objection to the use of American or other imported coal on the Canadian lines. I do not think one can find either equity or justice in the procedure followed. However I do not propose to go into this question to such an extent as to burden the house with a lot of figures. I always say that figures are tiresome. I shall endeavour to deal with conditions as they exist to-day.

The manner in which the Canadian National Railways has been managed for the last number of years is responsible to a very large extent for the situation prevailing to-day in the coal trade of Nova Scotia. Our markets in Ontario have been extended to