

Mr. MARTIN: But I sent some one to make inquiries, to secure bills for coal and these were sent to the hon. minister. At least, if they were not sent, my instructions were not obeyed. What would the minister have us do? The mere fact that a sale has been made at a higher than reasonable price is not an offence? We have to prove that he has coal in his yard which he refuses to sell. That is what our attorney—

Mr. CROTHERS: Why did you not send a man up to consult?

Mr. MARTIN: Because it was not necessary. I spoke to Mr. Lamarche, formerly a member of this House, and to Mr. Laurandeau, and they told us that what we must do is to make an inquiry and send the facts to the minister. We sent bills for coal that had been received. And the commission is going yet.

Mr. CROTHERS: It was not necessary to send anything of that kind to us. If the hon. gentleman found that any man was selling coal at prices that were unreasonable or unjust, he could take action against him.

Mr. MARTIN: That is not what Mr. Laurandeau tells us, and he is an ex-judge. The minister may say that Mr. Laurandeau did not understand it. In that case I am ready to believe that nobody could understand it.

Mr. CROTHERS: If my hon. friend had sent his solicitor as we requested we would have pointed out to him what should be done.

Mr. MARTIN: The Government should have entered upon an inquiry last fall, to find out just what supplies were available. Then they should have put on an embargo wherever it was necessary, in order to keep food for the family—the family of Canada, whose interest the Government has in charge. They should have provided that what food was necessary should be kept at home and the rest sent to the Allies.

Mr. CROTHERS: And what was the hon. gentleman's duty as mayor of Montreal?

Mr. MARTIN: To work for the people, as I did. And next election will prove that they think I did well.

Mr. VERVILLE: Has anybody been prosecuted under this Order in Council?

Mr. CROTHERS: No, we have no power to prosecute.

[Mr. Crothers.]

Mr. VERVILLE: I believe the time has come—in fact, came some time ago—when the Government should try to control the prices of foodstuffs. In dealing with the case of the miners of the West the minister stated that the Government had paid \$92,000 on account, as I understood him, of the increased cost of living, that increase for the time covered having been \$1.75 a week. But if the minister does not proceed to the regulation of food supplies in four or five months from now, perhaps, the cost of living will have gone up another \$1.75 a week. Will he then take another \$92,000 to make that up? Anybody who knows the conditions here and on the other side of the line knows that the profits paid in Canada in some cases are quite unreasonable. The minister spoke of the increase in the cost of living in the United States, but he forgets that the wages there are higher than in Canada.

Mr. CROTHERS: No.

Mr. VERVILLE: Then, they must have changed very lately, for about the first of the month I was in Detroit, Chicago, Indianapolis and Cleveland, and in those cities wages were higher than in Canada. And the minister knows it. We cannot compare the cost of living on this side and on the other side unless we take wages into account. The hon. gentleman knows that as soon as war was declared between the United States and Germany the heads of the labour people in the United States were called into consultation by the Government upon the cost of living. There is an example which the minister might well follow. If my hon. friend has not done it so far, why does he not do it now? It is better now than never. Why does he not consult the best labour men in the country and ask them to help him to solve the problem of the high cost of living? I do not say that my hon. friend can do it alone but if he would gather together a number of men, the same as they have done in the United States, he would do something towards finding a solution for this difficulty. The resolution which No. 149; International Association, signed—

Mr. CROTHERS: Have they reduced the price of anything yet?

Mr. VERVILLE: They have not reduced the price but they are going to control prices. It is only three weeks since war was declared.

Mr. CROTHERS: But before war was declared they had street riots over there