

DISCUSSES PROBLEMS AND FUTURE OF NOVA SCOTIA COAL INDUSTRY

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The day of decision has arrived for Nova Scotia coal.

With current production of about 6,000,000 tons a year, the province's soft-coal industry is for the moment in fair condition. About as much coal is being sold as can be produced and unemployment is not severe.

But, for the greater part, the industry is losing money, has lost some of its more profitable markets and is threatened by loss of more.

"What are you going to do?" is the question being asked of coal companies, workers, and governments at all levels.

The answer will register most sharply in Nova Scotia—in sustained or increased prosperity, or in economic and human shock. Its effects will be felt far into the heart of Canada by every worker and business whose products are sold in Nova Scotia, and will ripple across the country.

During a visit to Nova Scotia's coal fields I talked to scores of persons. None pretended to know the absolute answer.

Several students of the industry cautioned:

"Don't think there is any easy or pat solution. The answer will be made up of many things."

MUST CUT COSTS

The problem of Nova Scotia coal is, briefly, high cost of production which makes it vulnerable to competition from lower-cost American coal and other fuels.

The problem for company and workers is to increase productivity so as to bring down production costs.


Coal difficulties are not peculiar to Nova Scotia. Western Canadian and North American fields in general also face declining markets. But perhaps nowhere else in Canada does the industry form such a large part of the economy.

Some say production of 8,000,000 tons a year would mean prosperity. Probably no one wants much more than that and some doubt that it could be produced.

Others see possibility of a 50-per-cent drop to 3,000,000 tons, probably no one thinks output will fall below that.

At present 6,000,000 tons, about 15,000 persons are directly employed by the industry, and it has been estimated one-fifth of Nova Scotia's population, or 130,000 people, are more or less directly dependent on it. Probably all Nova Scotians derive some of their living from it.

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by the Nova Scotia department in it for Nova Scotia.

At present, the Dosco group sells 64 per cent of its production in the Atlantic provinces and 36 per cent in Quebec and Ontario, as far west as Cornwall, Ont. Dosco itself uses 1,000,000 tons for its steel operations.

Harold Gordon, general manager of Dosco's coal operations, estimates market losses of coal chiefly from oil, as follows: Industrial uses in Quebec, 400,000 tons a year; industrial uses in Atlantic provinces, 450,000 tons; domestic uses in Atlantic provinces, 500,000 tons.

Railway diesel power may mean a loss of 625,000 tons by 1957.

These figures, plus the fact that competition is increasing rather than decreasing, are back of fears that coal production may fall 3,000,000 tons.

SEE BRIGHTER FUTURE

However, coal's present difficulties are regarded by most authorities as a passing phase which will be overcome with higher population, more industry and increased demand for the coal.

Some authorities see the end of the decline within four or five years. The 1952-53 annual report of the Dominion coal board, a federal government authority, said:

"Despite adverse factors, final analysis of Canada's future energy requirements indicate that demand for coal will substantially increase from 1965 onwards."

"The best approach appears to be by way of concerted courses of action by the federal government, the provinces and components of the trade itself, within their respective spheres, aimed at the maintenance of the Canadian coal industry at the optimum level possible until such time as play of normal economic forces places it on a sound foundation."

UTMOST COLD

Absolute zero — at which theoretically all molecular action stops — is at 459 degrees below zero fahrenheit.

Sulfa Drugs Have Staged Comeback

CHICAGO (AP)—The sulfa drugs have staged a comeback after being temporarily overshadowed by antibiotic drugs such as penicillin, a New York doctor says.

Dr. David Lehr of the New York Medical College reports that the comeback has amounted to a "conspicuous resurgence" of these drugs which were among the big guns in medicine's artillery before being relegated to a somewhat rear-line position following the advent of the antibiotics in the 1940's.

He has told the annual meeting here of the American Academy of Pediatrics that the main reasons for the "resurgence" include:

1. Development of improved techniques for employing the sulfas—including use of a "mixture principle" which he said greatly reduces a kidney-damaged hazard once commonly associated with sulfa use.
2. "Growing recognition of some major shortcomings" of antibiotics, especially the "broad spectrum" types like aureomycin, terramycin and chloromycetin which are potent against a broad range of germs.

Dr. Lehr says that while drugs of this type are bad news to a host of germs, their action some-

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