

INTERNED ALIENS AND SNOW TO SAG FUEL PRICES, VIEW

Winnipeg Merchants Look For Drop—Will Not Profit by Shortage

Interned aliens and snow are the agencies on which local dealers are depending for a sufficient supply of Canadian coal and for a reduction in the price of wood this winter, heads of various local firms stated today. Without more laborers to work the western mines, the owners will not be able to provide customers with coal beyond 50 per cent. of the usual requirements, it is asserted.

If interned aliens are compelled to dig out coal, Winnipeg will not suffer any shortage. There is little hope entertained, however, that the federal government will insist on aliens working in the mines, dealers declared.

Turns Down Orders

One prominent coal merchant said his firm is not taking orders from new customers. He is only able to provide half enough Canadian coal for regular customers, he asserted. He stated that if alien labor was employed in the Lethbridge mines the output would be doubled within 30 days. Local consumers would then secure all they wanted before the cold weather sets in, he declared.

"If Canadian prisoners and aliens in Germany are made to work because of the shortage of labor there, then it is up to the Canadian government to adopt a policy to utilize alien labor to provide sufficient fuel to keep local citizens warm. Because the prisoners refuse to work, on the grounds that they are getting three square meals a day and a warm bed to sleep in, and on that account do not need to work, there will be a shortage in the coal supply. As far as I know there is no intention among the coal men to take advantage of the shortage in the western supply and boost the price. The whole thing hinges on the labor problem," the merchant concluded.

Mine Sets Price

As the prices for eastern coal is set at the Pennsylvania mines, and is now \$11.25 for hard coal, Winnipeg firm managers said there is little prospect of the cost being reduced. On the other hand the managers assert they do not anticipate any boost in the cost, as events affecting this coal are proceeding normally. The failure of the United States railway strike to come off was the most ominous thing which appeared on the business horizon to interfere with coal and its price, the managers said.

The wood situation, they assert, depends on snow. When it comes in sufficient quantities, they believed the wood can be gotten out of the localities where it was piled last winter, but on account of the abnormal depth of snow, owners were unable to haul it to railways. "When snow comes and the wood can be brought to the city, the price of all kinds of wood will drop between \$1 and \$2 a cord," a Portage avenue dealer said. "We expect that the price of wood will commence to drop around the first of the new year, and as gradually as the supply from the outlying districts increases."