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EXCERPT FROM CONGRESSIONAL RECORD

January 24, 1950

(copy of speech by Rep. Gerald R. Ford, Jr., made on the floor of the House of Representatives, January 23rd, 1950)

MR. FORD. Mr. Speaker, during the past few weeks I have been receiving numerous complaints about the coal shortage in the Fifth Congressional District in Michigan as well as in other sections of my great state. The complaints have become more numerous due to the wave of cold weather which has gripped the Midwest during this time. As an example, I should like to read to the House a telegram and an excerpt from a letter which I received a few days ago:

"Although we have about 30 days' supply of coal we have been notified by St. Joseph Lead Co., Josephstown, Pa., that they cannot ship zinc oxide after Friday this week. Also notified by Pennsylvania Industrial Chemical Corp., Clairton, Pa., and the Neville Island, Pittsburgh, Pa., they are both shutting down January 20. Without supply of raw materials we cannot operate. What do you mean there is no coal emergency?"

The excerpt from the letter reads as follows:

"Because of the coal situation which has prevailed for some months past, we have been unable to store up stocks of coal adequate for reasonable insurance against curtailment, or perhaps, entire stoppage of our plant activities, involving employment of over 2,500 employees. No doubt our own situation is paralleled in innumerable cases all over the country."

I want to go on record and state that the present coal crisis is not a dream as the executive branch of our government seems to think, but rather a diabolical reality of pain and suffering as well as economic instability. The situation is grave now and is becoming more so with each passing day. It is a well-known fact that there is a pressing need for domestic fuel and if conditions do not change human suffering will prevail.

This question may be asked in the crisis: Does John L. Lewis control the economic destiny of our country? One would seem to think so judging from the conduct of our executive department. As one of my colleagues said a few days ago, and I quote:

"This is no time to toy with words, to play politics, or to try to escape responsibility because of technicalities. Affirmative and decisive action is essential on the part of the President. Joe Stalin may control Russia, but John L. Lewis must not be permitted to control the United States. The Taft-Hartley law may have its defects but certainly it contains language giving ample authority to the President and the executive agencies to intervene in behalf of our people and put an end to this emergency which is not only already a calamity but, in many instances, disastrous."

That, gentlemen, is my sentiment.



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