

MINING TROUBLES.

Views of the Miners and the Company.

Spirit of Unrest Has Settled Over the Sydney Mining Population, and the Outcome is Awaited With Interest.

Special Correspondence of the Daily Sun.

SYDNEY, C. B., Dec. 15.—The Dominion Coal Company and its miners, with number upwards of 3,000 men, now face to face with one of the greatest problems that has come since mining began in Cape Breton.

To understand the situation better it may be of interest to go back and note what has transpired within the past several months. From statements made occasionally in the press, the inference might be learned that things were not running quite so smoothly as formerly in and around the collieries.

The explanation of it all came a few days ago, when the company asked the different lodges of the Provincial Workmen's Association to confer with them on a matter of great importance, both to the men and the company.

In presenting this proposition, the company claimed that for the past year or two the cost of production had increased enormously, and for the same reason had to be advanced in the wages; that owing to the strong competition met with on the St. Lawrence from the Pennsylvania coal operators, they are forced to lessen the price of their coal, and as well as improve its quality and appearance.

The company's normal output is in the vicinity of three million tons annually. Of this amount, forty-five per cent. is already disposed of on long term contracts with the Dominion Iron and Steel Company, the Everett Coke and Gas Company, and for the company's own consumption.

It would appear that for the past few years the market was not over-particular as to the quality of coal being produced. While the flow of prosperity lasted, consumers were willing to accept practically any kind of coal; but now that industrial conditions are changing a little for the worse, they are becoming more particular, and demand that a certain quality be supplied them.

It has always been the policy of the company to extend its present and seek new markets. That it is pushing into wider fields is known from the reports that from time to time large shipments are made to Sweden, South Africa and Mexico.

They are advertising themselves, but advertising Canada as well. They are endeavoring now to get into the Ontario markets, but are met with violent competition from American coal, so much so that the only means they have of securing them, if at all possible, is through assistance from both the federal and local governments.

They are thus forced to make concessions which will be granted. The company, at all events, feel that they have too much at stake at the present moment to depend upon future contingencies. They are thus forced to make the only alternative—impose conditions calculated to improve the quality of the coal and make a substantial reduction in the wages of the men.

is to avoid resorting to any drastic measures whereby these changes can be brought into effect that the company is now inviting the men to meet them in conference and assist in finding a solution of the situation.

Providing the men will consent to a readjustment of mining rates, adopt improved methods of mining and seek more regularly in their work, the company will undertake to provide them with steady employment, thus ensuring to the men good wages; to introduce such new machinery as may be needed to shear the coal under the most advantageous conditions to the miner, and to allow the day workmen the same rate of wages as they are paid today.

Should this proposal be accepted, the company feel that much hardship and suffering will be avoided during the coming winter, and that the men will have the comfort of knowing that for the next three years at least they will be assured of a steady employment at a fair rate of wages, without fear of interruption through labor disputes.

As to the men, they have their conditions and while they feel that the "pinch of poverty" is not "to be devoutly wished for," still they will be very loath to submit passively to a cut in their wages, and this they claim is the basic principle of the contract before them.

They claim that the mining of the coal at the present price with additional labor imposed upon them in that connection, means a reduction and nothing else. They admit that the cost of production is increasing and that they are earning less than they were two years ago. They assign the increase in the cost of production to the increase in the number of machines, used and the vast amounts expended by the company in doubtful improvements in and around the collieries.

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Many people in Western Australia will regret to hear of the death of Captain J. G. Knight, who had for the last three years resided in Claremont.

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The Surest Remedy is Allen's Lung Balsam. It never fails to cure a SIMPLE COUGH, BRONCHITIS, COLIC, and all BRONCHIAL TROUBLES.

educated to produce such coal; and if the company undertakes to do this, it will be unwise that it has taught them for the past few years, when it was a question of a big output, immaterial of what the quality was.

The superintendent's report at the annual meeting of the School for the Blind at Halifax was in part as follows: The table of attendance shows that 154 blind persons have been under instruction during the past year.

During the past year several changes have been made in our teaching staff. The position in the junior department made vacant by the resignation of Miss Josie Cox has been filled by Miss M. Nicolson of Fredericton.

We have our kindergarten, our primary and grammar school grades, and our high school course. The work of the school in these grades we compare favorably with that performed in the best schools in the maritime provinces.

In the musical department we have twenty-five pianofortes, two cabinet organs, and a full set of reed and brass instruments for the use of the school. The pupils memorize the music by having it read to them by readers with sight, or they commit it to memory from sheets and books printed in the Braille musical notation.

In this department the pupils are trained to use their hands to the best possible advantage. Hand-training is particularly marked for the use of the pupils in the present willow basket-making, brush-making, and cane-sticking are taught to the boys, the girls receiving instruction in crocheting, knitting, sewing, and embroidery.

It is satisfactory to note that several adult blind persons have obtained remunerative employment in mills side by side with their fellow workmen who are seeing, sewing, and will, I believe, commend itself to the employer of labor throughout the maritime provinces and Newfoundland.

Certificates as pianoforte tuners were awarded to Frank McDonald of Charlottetown; Archibald Stuart of Margaree, and Sandford Upham of Prosser Brook, N. B.

It was the one hundredth anniversary of Howe's birth. A public meeting was held in the Academy of Music immediately following the unveiling at which an oration on Howe was delivered by Attorney General Longley, and speeches were made by Geo. Mitchell, M. P., R. L. Borden, Major Crosby, W. E. MacLellan, Rev. W. J. Armstrong, Geo. N. Forbes, Rev. Ernest Forrest and Hon. William Ross.

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SCHOOL FOR BLIND. Superintendent's Report is a Favorable One. Number of Pupils Now in Attendance—Outline of the Work—The Graduates.

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SKINNER CHOSEN. His Was the Only Name Offered at Liberal Convention. Speakers Thought He Would be a Better Candidate Than Dr. Smith.

The liberal convention was held last Tuesday in Berryman's Hall and A. O. Skinner was selected as the candidate in the coming provincial election in this city. Between 200 and 250 electors were assembled in the hall, and the nominating proceedings passed off very quickly and very quietly.

The nomination of Mr. Skinner was almost immediately followed by a motion for the close of nominations, and almost before the cry took in the fact the room was closed.

Mr. Skinner reached the hall thanked the electors for his nomination, and was glad to see good a reception. There has been talk about Dr. Smith being a candidate. The first I knew of this was yesterday morning.

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