

I am pleased to notice that the more respectable, and responsible, of the newspapers are giving scant space, and at long intervals, to the effusion of the writer called Gadsby. Some of them do not give his name in full, out of sheer shame, presumably. That is well, one cannot handle pitch without being defiled. Gadsby's ambition seemingly is to be considered factious. Instead of that he succeeds in being contemptible. It may be taken for granted that any newspaper willing to insert Gadsby's scurrilous articles is very hard up for copy, or is willing to go to any extreme in opposition to the present government, all its members and all its works. I said to a friend the other day: "I think I will enlighten Gadsby on a point or two about the late Shell Committee." He said: "Leave him alone; don't you know that it is the part of wisdom to give a certain unsavory smiling animal as wide a berth as possible?" Well, taking the advice I will not reply at any length to his latest libels on the Shell Committee. I express the hope that a parliamentary committee will be appointed to investigate what basis there is for the innuendos and assertions regarding the committee emanating from the Gadsby and other sources. The funny—the amazing—thing is that some of the newspapers willing to play fair with the Shell Committee adopt a half apologetic manner when writing in defence. This arises from the fact that they cannot be familiar with all that the committee has done, and all that they have saved, and helped, the Empire. Time will come when the actions of the committee will be vindicated and the big work they accomplished acknowledged.

It looks as if the failure of the Aecadia Coal Coy. to work the mine at Thorburn at the solicitation of representatives of the people living there will furnish the politicians, local and federal, with splendid opportunities for showing zeal that consumes for the welfare of the Thorburn people, more especially the voters there. It is said that a member of the government declared publicly that the local government had made a tremendous mistake in giving the Aecadia Coy. a lease for all the areas instead of leases for the areas in the several localities. If that is so then its shortcomings do not apply to the Aecadia areas alone, but to those of several companies and these the biggest in the province. The politicians should be as careful as possible not to talk nonsense. If the local government is to be asked to put "on the screws" in this instance then it has a busy season before it, for the Aecadia is not the only company working a colliery in one district and allowing a colliery to remain idle in another locality. For years the mine at Thorburn has been a subject of anxiety to the company, and it had been all but determined on more than one occasion to close it down, but hoping against hope the company kept working even at a loss. Of course there are those who say the mine can be made to pay. That is possible, but the way to accomplish so desirable an end has not been made plain. Thorburn has not been abandoned, else the government might have the right to step in. It is expected yet to recover the big body of coal there, but the company maintains that the present is not the time to do so. One reason given among others being the scarcity of men at their better paying collieries.

The following stunning paragraphs are from an

article written for the Herald by one evidently not to the manor born. A reading of them, from one view point, amazes, from another, amuses. The writer of them after having explained where 95% of the Dominion Coal Co.'s output went, says:—

"Leaving 5 per cent. which goes to fill contracts in the United States entered into prior to the war, when we were only too glad to furnish a winter output, when times were blue. This 5 per cent. represents a negligible quantity of low grade, non-metallurgical stock. It would be practically useless for war purposes."

"The Dominion Coal Co. has been subjected to a measure of criticism since the outbreak of the war, with regard to those United States contracts. It is but fitting that their reply to that criticism be set down baldly, and as it is given, without comment."

"When sounded on the subject came the remark 'they would welcome the interference, if the government stepped in and cancelled these contracts.'"

Taken as a whole the paragraphs are a masterpiece of misinformation. Taken separately they indicate to what a nice science some official of the Dominion Coal Co. has reduced the by-times useful art of leg pulling, or they afford striking illustrations of the wrongful and ridiculous inferences for which faulty expression is responsible. Among the inferences the ordinary reader would draw, are these:

1. That when times were not blue no slack coal was shipped to U. S.

2. That a "winter output" is a negligible quantity.

3. That Dominion slack is low grade, or, and, that what is sent to U. S. is specially selected because of its degradedness.

4. That the Dominion Coal Co. in sending coal to the U. S. has been censured for trading with the enemy.

5. That these censures originated in Canada.

6. That the company was blamed for sending low grade slack to U. S.

7. That the large quantity, comparatively, of coal sent to the New England railways last year was "low grade slack."

8. That the company would like the government to forbid the D. C. Co. from sending slack coal to the United States.

9. That were it not for the war the coal trade of Nova Scotia would have went wholly to the dogs and be there now, and, the rankest inference of all that ninety-five per cent. of the coal shipped from Nova Scotia was for war purposes.

The article from which the extracts are taken has some good points, and yet it is a wonderfully amusing illustration of how easy it is for some impulsive souls to make a precipitate descent from the almost sublime to the wholly ridiculous.

THE COAL TRADE IN 1915.—MR. DRUMMOND IN THE HALIFAX HERALD.

Stellarton, December 30.—As Halifax Herald readers know, Nova Scotia has within her bounds the three requisites, without which, it has been declared, no country, no portion of a wide Dominion, such as ours, may hope to become of first importance. Need it be mentioned that these three are (1) large areas of land suitable for all agricultural purposes; (2) extensive, if not limitless coal fields, and (3) greatly expanding iron and steel manufac-