

diminished output, in Cape Breton County. Mr. Gray, in justice to himself, should have stated that his references were to Cape Breton County alone, for what he claims to be the chief factor is scarcely applicable to the Mainland collieries. It may not be denied that Cumberland and Pictou Counties contributed their full quota of men for overseas, or that, proportionately, they did about as well as Cape Breton County. If, then, the output of the two mainland counties has increased, it cannot be claimed that the shortage of men has vitally affected them, as is the case in Cape Breton. Indeed there were other causes that prevented an enlarged increase on the mainland. The two causes were mine fires and inadequate transportation facilities. Curiously, the shipments from the mainland in 1917 were the best since enlistments began, and only three thousand tons less than the best output year, 1913. Here are the outputs from 1913 to 1917: Year 1913, 1,109,000; 1914, 1,047,000; 1915, 1,017,000; 1916, 1,016,000; 1917, 1,106,000 tons, a most remarkable showing. But a still more remarkable, indeed an almost inexplicable thing is, assuming that the tables, giving number of men, in the official yearly report are reliable, that in 1915 it took 1,800 men to produce 1,017,000 odd tons of coal, whereas in 1916 it took only 1,520 men to produce 1,012,000 tons odd. Put another way, the men of 1916 produced 404 tons each more per man in the year than was done in 1915. This is something to be grateful for, and, for impelling us to ferret it out, the Record's thanks are due Mr. Gray. In speaking of outputs it might be well to differentiate as between the Island and the Mainland.

- Rubs by Rambler. -

The following from the Coal Trade Journal has it, shall it be said, a hidden truth, that may be well taken to heart by certain newspapers and many individuals who are clamoring for government control of the coal mines: "Why do the heathen so furiously rage and why do the people imagine a vain thing?" A great deal of the criticism on the Garfield order seems to reflect disappointment more than anything else. The public in general was crazy for Government control, as the saying is. It wanted to have the coal trade controlled as the railroads had been controlled for years past. Well, they got what they wanted, but if it so happened that they got it in the neck, that is another story, as Mr. Kipling said. And now, to quote that virile writer of pioneer days, old Bret Harte of California, "Walk, damn you, walk!"

The Halifax Herald calls for a thorough, fearless, and immediate probe into the causes of the Sellar-ton disaster. The Record, I am sure, supports the call, but possibly not from the same motives, or for the same reasons as your contemporary. The Record desires a thorough and public investigation not for the purpose of inflicting punishment on some one who may have committed an error of judgment, or been

careless of duty, and not to find out whether "economy of production" on the company's part was responsible, for the very reason that at times the writer believes that on certain past occasions extreme precautions had been taken, in short there have been at times all but unnecessary precautions. What I am sure is most desired by all interested in coal mining is an investigation that will bring out facts, and opinions, that will tend to the prevention of such terrible occurrences. It may be taken for granted that the Acadia Coal Co. will place no obstacle, but rather render help in any investigation that may be instituted.

I wonder if the locomotive engineers ever asked their President or Secretary, Mr. Stewart, if he ever heard of the old saw, "Let the shoemaker stick to his last." No doubt Mr. Stewart is thoroughly familiar with what concerns railway travel and traffic, but that is not a sufficient reason for assuming that he is competent to tell the public the ins and outs and whys and wherefores of inadequate outputs. Mr. Stewart boldly declares that the assertion that the miners were not all doing their utmost in this time of stress is unfounded. That is equivalent to saying that he knows more about the coal business than Mr. Baxter, the vice-president and a leader in the A. M. W., the Nova Scotia miners' union, with a membership, it is claimed, of 9,000. Mr. Baxter and other leader of the society began a propaganda a fortnight or so ago, the object of which was to enjoin upon the men not only the desirability but the absolute necessity, of working regularly. Mr. Baxter to a Cape Breton press representative declared that a big effort would be made to induce the miners to work steadily and not go idle on the Mondays after each weekly pay, as so many did. If Baxter and other of the officials of the A. M. W. see the necessity for thus enjoining the members, then Mr. Stewart is wholly astray in asserting that the workers are in no way responsible if there is diminished output.

The coroner's inquest in connection with the disaster did not begin as expected last Wednesday. When the coroner was about to begin his inquiry objection was taken to the constitution of the jury in that it did not comply fully with the statute, as miners from other collieries were lacking. The act, sub-section 7, section 45 reads: "Whenever practicable the coroner shall require the constable, or other officer to summon, as jurymen, not less than three working men employed at any other mine than that at which the accident occurred, who shall form part of the jury sworn at such inquest." This section of the act has not, it is feared, been generally complied with for some time, and it is well objection was taken. At the time the clauses in references to inquests were framed things were somewhat different than they are to-day. For instance, in South Cape Breton the collieries are under the ownership of one company. Should an accident occur at, say, Dominion No. 1, and three jurymen were sworn who worked at Dominion No. 2, that would be a compliance with the letter of the law, but not with what

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