

Ross is displeased because the cost of mining has been going up at sky rocket speed. Costs, it is true, have gone up, but what is the use of exaggerating so vehemently. A 'man in the inside' tells the Herald—so runs the despatch, that "the profits are still enormous, probably four times or more per ton than any mine in the United States or Britain, still at the present rate of shrinkage it would not take long to wipe them all out." The Herald may tell this insider that he is either a fool a tool, or a traitor. If notwithstanding the sky rocket increase in cost the profits are still fabulous, what became of the should be enormous profits of the past years. In talking of profits the Herald's insider is befuddled. The nett profits of the Dominion Coal Co. are less, not more, than a majority of the big coal companies in the U. S. and Britain. All things considered the company these days is doing very well. It is not suffering for present but for past mistakes. Insider among other things told the Herald:—

- 1—That the management is weak.
- 2—Mines worked hand to mouth principle.
- 3—Work has to be done a long time ahead.
- 4—Wages in ten years advanced by ten cents per ton.
- 5—Price of coal advanced a dollar to a dollar fifty.
- 6—Management has lost control of labor employed.
- 7—Miners have only to point gun, down comes the coon.
- 8—Old and new workings not properly connected with the surface.
- 9—Work going on hind side first, at a ruinous cost.

To which I reply:—

1—This may or not be a reflection on Pres. Ross. He has made many and heroic attempts to secure the right kind of management. The best management in the world will never bring the price down to what it was in, say, David McKeen's time, for the very best management cannot prevent the pits lengthening and widening with age, the more use of timber to keep up the roof and the more pumping to keep the mine free of water.

2—The mines are not worked from hand to mouth; at the present time there are more places than men to fill them. The 'dead' work is kept well ahead.

3—Work has to be done in time, and it is.

4—The wages of miners alone have increased ten cents per ton. Where do the increases to pumpmen, shiftmen, bottomers, boys mechanics screenmen etc. etc., come in. Insider is certainly out.

5—Price of coal has advanced as has all other articles.

6—Has as good control as ever.

7—If the miners have only to point the gun and down comes the coon (whatever they demand) how comes it that the guns of all the miners trained on the wages bureau of the big coal company, have only succeeded in ten years in bringing down a ten cent coon, or a cents worth of coon each year. Neither the men nor the management go in for mimic warfare. Neither is easily scared.

8—The old and the new workings are not properly

connected with the surface." Indeed! 'Insider' can be of service here. Which would be his way. There are two known ways in N. S. by slope or by shaft. If there is a better way let's have it.

'Insider' should come out from among so crude a crowd. His talents should be placed where they will be appreciated.

They are trying to tell us that our young men are leaving the collieries and going west, because of the poor pay, more especially of the unbearable and intolerable conditions in connection with the work at the mines, and the degrading nature of the surroundings. Were I a present day miner I would be very apt not only to cry "save me from my friends" but to rail at those who profess to be the real and only champions of labor. How is it that, from the localities where workmen are better off in regard to wages, we hear most about want and misery. It is just because that in these localities there are certain men who think they have a mission, and that mission is to incite to restlessness and discontent. They tell us, do these embryo reformers, that the men are leaving the collieries because wages are low and work irksome. Neither are wages low nor is work irksome. The fact is that men leave one locality and go to another for two reasons. First, because changes are lightsome, and because they hope that in a larger field they will have larger opportunities. Some go from a desire to see life, some go in the hope to better their condition, and many go because others are going and for no other reason. We were never told that there was anything degrading in the work of a farm, or that a farmer's surroundings were intolerable. How comes it then that for every one who desires to escape mining there are five young men who flee from work on the farm. The exodus from the farms of Nova Scotia has been much greater than from her mines. Will the new fledged proudly prescient reformers favor us with a reason for this. A speaker at a late gathering said he could point to a section of a county in which there were twenty-five vacant farms. Farm produce is in bigger demand and at better prices than ever, and yet the farms are being deserted. There are no vacant houses to-day at any colliery in Nova Scotia. There are many applicants and no houses to give them. This does not seem to indicate that mining is the last ditch of the workmen. Not by any means. These reformers must come down from poetry to prose, from fiction to fact.

No one, to look at him, would take my good friend H. V. Jennison to be a humorist of the first water. He has an open face and a winning smile, while humorists as a rule have solemn visages. For all that H. V. is really a contributor to longevity. Addressing the Lime Rock legends the other day in a perferd burst he exclaimed: "The grit government are going, going, going!" In such a gathering one would think there would be some takers, but no, the hammer fell to his side and he was unable to pronounce the blissful word "gone". But that was not so funny as this: "The rats are leaving the sinking ship:—Where is Tarte, Blair, Sifton, Davies, Fitzpatrick, Fraser, Longley, McIsaac, &c. &c." Jennison best look out; the others may not resent the appellation he has bestowed upon them, but if Longley gets a hold of him he will rat-tan him.