

is not what it might be. In not a few mines, making heavy water, fires have been blazing for years. The fires in several of the Abitibi mines' pits have not been extinguished in over half a century. Several of the "burnt mines" have been hermetically sealed, and this sealing off has been ineffective. Though some assert that it will, I cannot think a fire will burn and spread without air. If I am correct then the places thought to have been hermetically sealed off were not. Air got to the fire through some crack or crevice, or right from the surface down through the strata. The question I put to experts is this: "Will air find its way where water can percolate through the strata?" If it can then there is no mystery as to why several mines in Stollarton, which have been closed for half a century, are still on fire. The fire is fed with air from the surface. Now, on another tack, I have in my mind a pit which made water freely, similar to the north slope of Springhill. A portion of the pit was walled off, on account of fire. It is declared that there is still fire in the walled off place. In this pit the stoppage of the pumps for a week would have submerged the entire workings. Why is there still fire in the walled off—the supposed hermetically sealed—places, seeing the whole of the workings were equally wet. In view of the fact that it is not reached by the pumps, why is the walled off portion not full of water? Is there pressure within a walled off place? Is that pressure sufficient to cause the water to move on to a place where there is less resistance? These may be looked upon as very elementary and very foolish questions. All right. Tell me then in simple language, why the walled off portion of a very wet mine should keep burning for an indefinite term of years. And the telling can be followed up by information as to why fires in supposedly air tight places keep on burning persistently if not brightly.

Speaking broadly I am not inclined, as a rule, to devour the editorials of provincial papers. Of course, there are exceptions to prove this rule. One of these is the editorial page of the Sydney Post. I do not know the editor, and while I am not going to say that unlike Homer, he never nods, I can freely say of him, "He's not too bad." He writes largely and clearly. There is no difficulty in understanding what he is driving at. He strives to be reasonable, that is as reasonable as one may expect an adroit politician to be. Holding these opinions one may guess how grieved I was to notice the slip he made, in the Post of Nov. 25, when he penned the following: (I make paragraphs of the sentences for convenience):

"The coal fields of this province are among the heritages of the people of Nova Scotia."

"They have been administered by the liberal government at Halifax as trustees for the people."

"The royalties which are paid by coal operators are fixed by the Nova Scotia government."

"In view of these facts it is surely pertinent to point out that Mr. Murray and his associates might reasonably be expected to exercise the power vested in them to protect the public against the enhanced prices of coal."

The question I ask is what power Mr. Murray and his associates might exercise. I have a blank coal

lease and the powers the government can exercise are clearly stated. The one thing affecting prices the government can do is, in some cases, be it noted in some cases only, to increase the royalty. That certainly would have an effect on prices, but not in the desired direction. It goes the royalty, and up goes the price of coal to twice the increased royalty, and there is no power, Murray or Douglas, to stop it. If there is I do not know of it, and if there is I want to know; and live no longer in ignorance. If Murray has no power why heckle him? Murray can no more reduce the high cost of living by any arbitrary means than can Borden, so what good end, even political, is to be served by twitting the one and taunting the other?

It has long been said that children are easily pleased. And that is well. It is well, also, that it takes a very little thing to go a long way in provoking the hilarity of politicians who are fervid in their partisanship. What fun many editors had over the method and the manner of Frank Stanfield's resignation as a member of the provincial parliament. They, the editors, poked all manner of fun at him for having sent his resignation to the conservative association instead of to Premier Murray. As I view it I back Stanfield's procedure, and say it was the correct and courteous way, even if it went contrary to the principles of partisan economy. Who elected Stanfield? Was it Murray? No. Then it was his first duty to notify those responsible for his election. He was returned for Colechester under the patronage of the Colechester C. A., or if you want it expressed differently, then, by grace of that association. The tory members, the grit members of the assembly were in very truth the nominees of the several associations. These, therefore, are entitled to first consideration. Had Mr. Stanfield sent his resignation to Murray direct, he laid himself open to the charge of ingrate. Why did he send it in the first place to the association? For their approval or disapproval. If they did not or would not back him up, then his resignation went to Halifax; if they refused acceptance his duty was to fight it out, with the association at his back.

The following is clipped from the Sydney Post: Mr. F. A. Crowell, chief recruiting officer for Cape Breton county, in an interview Saturday gave the following replies to queries:

"How is recruiting?"

"Considering the restrictions we are under we have nothing to complain of."

"What restrictions?"

"The order for industrial conscription now in force in Cape Breton retards to a very great extent the freedom of the individual."

"You mean, a man cannot enlist for overseas service even if he wishes to?"

"I do. No man who is an employee of the Dominion Coal, or Dominion Steel plants, or has worked for them during the immediate past can enlist."

"Are there no exceptions?"

"Yes, a man may enlist if he has a permit from Mr. McDougall."

"Can't he resign from his position?"

"No, he cannot. We have been strictly forbidden to enlist any."

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