

Making a New and a Different Christmas

IT seems early to be talking about Christmas, doesn't it? But to the wise these days of autumn chill are sounding warnings that Christmas is not so far away. Year after year Christmas has seemed "so far away" until almost the last moment, that it has been spoiled by lack of preparation. Prepare this year. Send now for the DINGWALL Catalogue, so that the supply may not be exhausted later when you may chance to be in a Christmas mood.

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The Coal Mines of Alberta

By C. W. Higgins

WITH the advent of fall and the long winter days but a few weeks away, the people of Canada are now giving the coal situation a large amount of attention.

At all seasons of the year, the mining of coal is recognized as one of Canada's chief and important industries. Evidence of this fact has been very noticeable of late by the heavy movement of coal by the transportation companies. On virtually every train, operated for transportation of freight, carloads of coal are being hauled through the various provinces, from the many mines located in Canada. This will, to some extent, offset any rumors that Canada is faced with a shortage of coal for this winter.

The writer, a few days ago, was privileged to visit the Drumheller coalfield, which is declared to be among the largest in Canada. Drumheller, which is a town of more than 2,500 persons, is located on the Canadian Northern Railway, 85 miles east of Calgary, on the Red Deer River. In addition to this being only one instance in which the Canadian Northern Railway traverses through districts where industries of national importance are located, this transportation company has been instrumental to a large extent in the development of many of Canada's industries, particularly the coal and lumber and live stock industries. Since the opening up of this town by the railway company in 1911 until this day, Drumheller has been known as the coal town, and it may rightly be said to be such. Coal mined at Drumheller is supplied not only to the prairie provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, but is finding a trade market in Eastern and Central British Columbia. The town is built in a valley which is very picturesque. Numerous shacks and tents occupied by miners, assist in scattering the town to many miles in length. On either side hills of considerable height may be seen for miles. In several of these, seams of coal are visible to the naked eye.

Fourteen mines are now in operation in this Alberta district, and many miles of trackage has been built by the Canadian Northern Railway to accommodate cars to transport the daily output of coal. For miles hundreds of cars may be seen waiting to be loaded with coal to be distributed at various points in the prairie provinces.

The mines are operated the year round, provided labor is available. The slack season is from April to June. Beginning May 1st, 1917, the commencement of the coal year, there were 96,000 tons of coal shipped from these coalfields up to August 1st, as compared with 32,000 tons during the same period in 1916.

Those who have visited coal mines and seen operations, know how interesting an industry it is. Through the courtesies of the manager of the Alberta Block Company mines, and the Midland collieries, the writer was given the pleasure of accompanying the foreman to these respective mines, which are about thirty-five feet below the surface. Upon descending the shaft which leads to the mine a thought comes to one of entering a new world.

There, an underground of many miles of trackage is open to the visitor. On these, coal is transported from the seams to the hoist by means of small cars, carrying about a ton, and drawn by mules or horses. Each mule or horse, as the case may be, draws about four cars on an average. When a long haul is required the animals are arranged in tandem style to draw from eight to ten cars. On the main track which is several hundred feet long, electric lights make it most convenient for the miners and animals. Off the main passage and in places called rooms, the miners use a small lamp, containing calcium carbide, also electric lamps.

In each mine, more than 150 men are employed mining coal, which is now finding place in many homes of the West. The workmen go on duty at eight o'clock. Each morning an examination of every nook and corner in the mines is made by two examiners, two hours before the men go on duty. This is to detect gas. The examiners carry safety

lamps and these lamps are made in such manner they go out immediately gas is discovered. Each miner has his own work to do. Some miners work by piece work, others by day, in either case their remuneration averages much more than the average laborer.

The seam of coal which averages about six feet thick is cut by a six and a half foot cutter bar of steel with a pick set in chain, driven by 30 horse power motor. This cutting of the seam continues till a length of about 25 feet is made by bars and picks; then the coal is mined to a distance of about five and a half feet high, leaving in some cases, about half a foot of coal at the top for a support to the roof. While the seam is being cut, which is usually done by two men, tracks are being constructed in order to have this coal conveyed immediately.

From 500 to 600 tons a day is the output in the Newcastle coal mine on the eight hour shift. This coal is hauled up from the mine by a hoisting engine of 270 horse power, is lifted 75 feet, then screened and dumped into cars on train



W. P. Hinton, the new Vice-President and General Manager of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway

below. From every mine car which comes up to the surface to be screened a sample, which goes through the 1/4-inch screen, is taken and weighed. Each miner puts a brass check and number on the car and the weighman, after sample is weighed, gives the miner credit accordingly. Each car is dumped in a three-inch screen, then the stove coal is taken out. What coal goes over the three-inch screen is lump and disposed of accordingly. Three railway cars are loaded at one time. In an endeavor to place all grades of coal on the market the management of many mines have remodelled their collieries during the year. Much might be said of the development work in all collieries in the Drumheller district and great praise is due the mine managers, who are declared the best practical managers in Canada for the excellent foresight displayed in the arrangement of tunnels and precautions against accidents to workmen.

The coal is brought to the surface on a slope wide enough for a double track, power is supplied by a five horse power engine, a double drum hoist is used.

The question may be asked how the men and animals exist down in the mines. Every mine is ventilated by huge fans; several are driven by 50 horsepower engines. The fan in the A. B. C. mine has a capacity of 100,000 cubic feet per minute against one-inch water gauge. This air is distributed equally in the various rooms in the mines by means of doors. Two hundred cubic feet of air per minute to each man and animal is required by law.

It might be supposed that coal mining is anything but clean. This belief is