

When the people and Legislature of Nova Scotia had thus achieved the full measure of responsible government, and had acquired the right to all the minerals and the management and control of the mines and public lands of the Province, they naturally became restive at this improvident lease which had been granted for 60 years to the Duke of York. He had assigned his interest to other persons until the title had become vested in the General Mining Association of Nova Scotia, a well-known corporation, which opened up and began to work the coal mines of Nova Scotia. The sum of £3,000 sterling, which may have looked like a handsome rental in 1826, appeared utterly inadequate in 1849, and other coal mines had been discovered and embraced in the lease which others were beginning to work. The result was unceasing agitation on the part of the Legislature and Executive of Nova Scotia to get rid of the lease which the General Mining Association held through the Duke of York. It is not necessary to detail the various steps taken in this regard. They culminated in 1857 in the appointment of a delegation consisting of the Hon. J. W. Johnston, at that time Attorney-General of the Province of Nova Scotia, and Adams G. Archibald, Esq., one of the leading men of the Liberal party, afterwards Sir A. G. Archibald. These gentlemen proceeded to London and negotiated with the General Mining Association for a termination of the lease. They were successful in this effort, and an arrangement was entered into between these delegates and the General Mining Association on the 20th day of August, 1857, whereby the General Mining Association surrendered all its interests in the mineral rights of Nova Scotia, save and excepting certain areas in the counties of Cape Breton, Cumberland and Pictou, which were expressly reserved for them. The agreement also provided that in substitution for the rental which had been agreed upon in the

lease to the Duke of York in 1826, the General Mining Association should pay for every ton of coal taken from its mines a royalty equal to 6d. per ton on screened coal. Slack coal and coal used by the workmen and in carrying on the works or operations were to be free from royalty. It was likewise provided that if more than 250,000 tons were wrought or gotten or sold in any one year the said General Mining Association should pay a royalty of 4d. per ton for every ton over and above 250,000 tons. It was likewise provided that the Government of Nova Scotia should not lease coal mines to any other parties upon less favorable terms than those which had been previously agreed upon with the General Mining Association in 1857.

The arrangement was duly ratified by Act of Parliament in 1858, and was received with great satisfaction by the people of Nova Scotia. Provision had previously been made for the issuing of leases of mines not embraced in the lease to the General Mining Association. All arrangements with the General Mining Association were to terminate at the date fixed for the termination of the original lease to the Duke of York, namely, the 25th day of August, 1886. Then it was that the terms of the compact between the Government and the General Mining Association ended and a new arrangement was to be entered into. During the pendency of that arrangement, only 6d. currency per ton royalty could be charged, and the Government imposed exactly the same royalty upon other coal-mining companies for all coal mined and sold. But it was distinctly provided, however, in every lease issued, that the Legislature should have the right on and after the 26th day of August, 1886, to alter, revise, increase, or diminish the royalties at will. In other words, on the 26th day of August, 1886, the Legislature of Nova Scotia was in exactly the same position to deal with its coal