

THE EVENING TIMES-STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1923

FREE COMPETITION FOR COAL IS URGED

Dr. Ingalls Says, Commission's Report Fails to Offer Solution.

New York, Sept. 22.—The report of the United States Coal Commission did not get to the bottom of things, declares Dr. W. R. Ingalls, New York mining engineer and economist, in the official journal of the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers. Dr. Ingalls urges free competition in the coal industry, which, he says, would bring about the elimination of the unit.

"The Coal Commission report," he asserts, "really gets no further than the conclusion that anthracite is a necessity whereof not enough is produced, and, if the operators and miners quarrel, with the result of a strike and the cessation of production, there is bound to be great misery for the public."

"Neither the public interest nor public sentiment will permit such a thing to happen again." Therefore the Coal Commission recommends that in such a juncture the President of the United States be authorized to take over the operation of the mines and the transportation and distribution and marketing of the product, with full power to determine the wages to be paid to mine workers, the prices at which coal shall be sold, and subject to court review, the compensation to be paid to land and mine owners.

"This is on the same lines as the

threat whereby President Roosevelt settled an anthracite strike many years ago. No matter how repugnant be the idea, this is perhaps the only possible immediate expedient. But what would happen if, after the President had taken over the mines and determined the wages to be paid to mine workers, the latter should still refuse to work?

"It seems to me that there is a broader solution of the anthracite problem, complex though it be. The Coal Commission dwells a good deal upon anthracite being a limited natural monopoly. It is so only in the sense that it occurs in a single region of the United States, but in that region the beds are widespread and the ownership is diverse.

"There exists already a competition, as is evinced by the different prices of the independents and the railroad companies. The railroad companies sell for what is substantially a uniform price, which is to their credit, considering that they might get more. This very discrepancy implies lack of freedom in action.

"There should be a removal of all economic restrictions and the establishment of free competition, which would tend naturally to the extinction of the unit. If it should prove that even so the demand were in excess of the supply, high prices would naturally prevail.

"The complete unionization of anthracite labor will keep the workers and the operators in partnership and the workers will be bound to get a big share of the produce. In such an event, the public can only pray for the early offering of a satisfactory substitute.

"As to the high cost of final distribution of anthracite, which constitutes a large element of what the consumer has to pay, that is an affair of the public itself and is quite within its control. If the people of a town see fit to support five coal dealers when but two are necessary, that is their own lookout. Probably they have never thought of this."

Mr. Ingalls points out that the report contains no data showing the output of the mines, the number of man-days of labor used in making the output, although these are essential data easily obtainable from most large mining companies, and, probably, from the anthracite mining companies.

"Such data throw light upon the efficiency of labor, but that is a sub-

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ject about which very little is to be learned from the report of the Coal Commission. Here and there are to be found some suggestions respecting it, but they are inconclusive."

The statistics of earnings by miners are presented in a clumsy way and are difficult of analysis and interpretation, according to Mr. Ingalls, who calls this a fault that runs through the whole report. He adds:

"When engineers and organizers have devised ways and means for using petroleum products in our houses, conditions will begin to be different."

"In the meanwhile, anthracite coal appears to be obeying simply the law of supply and demand. The supply of anthracite has not increased commensurately with the increase in population. The Coal Commission emphasizes this, but does not explain the reasons why or what might be done to increase the supply. The resources exist. Although every year they are becoming less easily mined, it is preposterous to think that the increases in costs and prices are to be explained in that way. No such thing has happened in our copper mines which also are becoming more difficult to work."

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MORNING NEWS OVER THE WIRES

John S. Martin, M. L. A., of Chatham, and Hon. C. W. Robinson, Moncton, will represent the N. B. Government at the labor conference called by the Dominion Government.

Rev. H. E. Thomas of this city read a paper on the "Extrabiblical Evidence for the Unique Supremacy of Jesus" at the closing session of the Maritime Methodist Institute at Sackville last night.

Lady Allen's war claim of \$61,873.08 was proved in Montreal yesterday. It was made up as follows: \$30,240, loss of personal effects on the Lusitania; \$25,000 for damages due to injuries; and \$6,633.08 for medical treatment.

BEEBLE BATS MOSQUITOS.

A beetle on the African Gold Coast has the useful habit of eating the "grubs" of mosquitos. The bug, a tiger beetle with the imposing name of *Cicindela octoguttata*, goes to the edges of ponds where the grubs are swimming and fishes them out of the water. It helps very materially to reduce the number of mosquitos in any area which it inhabits.

One of the great problems of modern tropical medicine is the killing of mosquito larvae, consequently, it is probable that an effort will be made to cultivate the new beetle extensively. At present one method of the same sort is in use in most malarial countries. This consists in putting shoals of a tiny fish known as "millions" into mosquito ponds. The "millions" feed on the grubs.

Science is beginning to take a very deep interest in these "balances of nature" for it is probable that, by making a judicious use of them, both health and crops can be improved. The ravages of the "green fly" for instance, are controlled by the "ladybird." In a poor ladybird year the green fly becomes a serious pest.

Rev. Roderick MacDonald, Antigonish, Sept. 22.—Rev. Roderick MacDonald, one of the oldest Catholic clergymen in the diocese of Antigonish, was passed away here yesterday. He was born at Maryvale, Antigonish County, in 1847.

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