

Workings were carried on in the Dalhousie pit for a number of years in the coal lying between the level of the shaft and its outcrop, and through a slant running to the dip in a northwesterly direction. In this colliery much of the coal was worked to a height of about twenty-seven feet, leaving tall and weak pillars; this brought on a general crush which overwhelmed a great part of the workings. The final blow to this colliery, however, was delivered from another and newer shaft. For some unexplained reason it was decided in 1866 to start a colliery to the westward of the crushed workings of the Dalhousie pit. A comparatively superficial examination would have shown that in the district to be commanded by the new pit the coal was inferior in quality, and that whatever there was of good coal to the dip of the shaft would have been ultimately secured by the new shaft then being sunk to the dip of the Bye pit workings. However, the shaft known as the Foster pit was sunk, and ill-advisedly connected with the western faces of the Dalhousie pit. Some large stoppings built to shut off some of these connections took fire, and in May, 1870, both the pits were practically closed. The expenditure on the Foster pit was totally lost, without any return whatever, as only a few tons of coal had been extracted.

The closing chapter of these notes on coal mining in Pictou County refers to the Foord pit. This shaft was projected at the same time as the Foster pit, and intended to win the large area of coal lying in the northern half of the area to the dip of the abandoned Store, Bye and Dalhousie collieries. It was successfully completed, reaching the main seam at a depth of about 900 feet, and equipped with the best pumps, hoisting machinery, etc., procurable in England. It was continuously worked until 1880, when a terrific explosion of gas caused the loss of nearly fifty lives, and it was found necessary to let in the water of the East River, on account of the coal being set on fire by the explosion. After some years the water was pumped out, and an attempt made to reopen it. As an undue amount of air was admitted into the old workings during the operation of reopening, spontaneous fires arose which led to the reclosing of the pit in the fall of 1892. The explosion in 1880 was communicated to the Cage pit, or deep seam workings, a through tunnel, and that colliery has also since remained closed. The details of the history of the Foord pit and of the attempts made to reopen it are given in a report by the writer to the Government of Nova Scotia made in 1895, and need not be dwelt upon here.

The reopening of the solid or unworked coal lying to the north of the Foord pit, as well as of the pillars and lower half of the seam in the old workings are discussed in the report referred to. At present the mining operations in the Pictou Main Seam, begun in 1817 and continued up to 1892, are practically closed.

The lessees when they found all their mines closed by explosions and fires in 1880, opened two underlying seams which have since been worked