

# MARITIME MINING RECORD

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## COAL TRADE, 1906.

The coal trade of the province, for the past year, shows gratifying if not wonderful expansion. The increase in shipments over 1905 is close on half a million tons. A larger increase may, in some quarters have been anticipated, but towards the close of the year, in fact during the last quarter, a number of circumstances combined, fires, misunderstandings, and a strike, to dash the hopes of those who had looked for a record increase. And yet, there is no great occasion for regrets. Of the year 1906 it shall be said that in it coal shipments passed the five million mark. It took the surprisingly—as we look at things now—long period of nigh a century for the coal trade of the province to reach shipments of a million tons a year. In other words it took the shipments of 1791 ninety years before they had multiplied to a million tons. In 1881 the shipments reached these figures. It took fifteen years for the million to become two millions. These latter figures were reached in 1896. Five years only, after, the three millions mark was reached and then, swiftly, in two years, in 1903, the four millions; and, now, three years later, we witness the passing of the five millions yearly mark. Indeed it may be said that the trade really began to show signs of commendable activity only eight years ago. In seven years the increase in shipments have been some 215 per cent. If the increases be in like proportions during the next seven years, then 1912 should witness the passing of the ten million mark.

Up till say 1900 the St. Lawrence was Nova Scotia's best market for coal. Indeed it was then held that without that market there was no hope for the trade. Since 1900 the home market has been expanding rapidly until at the present time it leads the Montreal market by two or three hundred thousand tons. Nova Scotia furnishes now her own biggest coal market. The home consumption to-day equals the total production of the mines as recently as eleven years ago. This is remarkable and is due to the rapid expansion and establishment of industries. With the establishment of additional blast furnaces in the province we may hopefully look for a continuation of expansion in home consumption.

Increases are to the credit of Cape Breton, Inverness, and Pictou County, while Cumberland has fallen behind.

In Cape Breton, while the Dom. Coal Co. shows the largest increase in tons, the Nova Scotia Steel & Coal Co'y. shows the largest per centage of increase. In the case of this company every month

save two showed an increase over the corresponding month of the preceeding year. In this respect the company holds a unique position. The increase in shipments of the Dom. Coal Co. would, of course, have been more substantial had it not been for the fires at the Reserve and Hub, and the unfortunate dispute between it and the Dom. Iron & Steel Co. This dispute is responsible for the loss of a hundred thousand tons in shipments. The Gowrie & Blockhouse a little better than held its own. The other two smaller collieries did no more than mark time.

In Pictou County the surprise is the great increase in shipments of the Intercolonial Coal Co. This increase is over 70,000 tons, equal to thirty-five per cent. increase over the shipments of 1905. In the closing months of the year the Acadia began to show improvement in shipments. The Marsh mine about held its own. A new company started on a small scale but the sales which are principally for domestic purposes are small.

There is considerable improvement in Inverness County. The Inverness Coal & Ry. Co. made substantial advancement in sales, owing chiefly to the company having secured a large slice of the I. C. R. contract. The Mabon & Gulf Coal Co. made a fair start last year but abandoned operations for the season early as the colliery has no connection with the Inverness Railway. The Port Hood Company did only a small business by water in the Autumn and fall months.

It is regrettable that Cumberland should be the one county to show a decrease. The outburst of damp in one of the slopes followed by the boys strike, is mainly responsible for the falling off, for Springhill ships by far the largest proportion of the shipments from the county. There are more small mines in Cumberland than in any other county in the province, and, with the exception of those of the Canada Coals & Ry. Co'y, the directors of these have a peculiar form of religious belief. They think it sinful to make known to each other or to the public the extent of their operations. Indeed some of them have hesitation in informing the government at the proper periods with details of shipments. Owing to this we are forced to make approximate of their sales.

During the year many of the collieries were sorely inconvenienced from the scarcity of labor. At perhaps a majority of the collieries there was a sufficiency of miners, but of loaders there was an inconveniently insufficient supply.

Wages were fair, the operators say high. One thing is certain. If a miner cannot live well and save money these days, the opportunity may nev-