

## AROUND THE COLLIERIES.

An Inverness man writing to the Morning Chronicle says:—

Given a Government railway from the Strait of Canso to Eastern Harbor, the coal of Chimney Corner, St. Rose, and Inverness could be conveniently shipped every summer from that harbor to the St. Lawrence markets. The southern section of that railway would carry the coal of Mabou and Port Hood to Port Hastings for similar shipments. This is especially important, seeing the present and prospective requirements of those great central coal markets.

The Record would like to see the railway referred to built, and all the coal seams of Chimney Corner to Port Hood well opened up, but never in the hope, or with the intention of sending coal to the St. Lawrence market. Inverness county has had its own experience of the St. Lawrence market, and that is not stimulating. Had the Inverness company never sent a pound of coal to the St. Lawrence it is possible the colliery and the railway would not now be in the hands of a receiver. Neither Inverness, Pietou, nor Cumberland county colliers can hope in the present times, nor for an indefinite future time, to profitably compete with Cape Breton in the St. Lawrence markets, unless possibly under wholly governmental control. And even then it might not be other than a losing speculation.

The local government has acquired power to appoint a commission to make open and naked every matter or thing in connection with the coal industry in Cape Breton county. A champion of Inverness is chagrined that Inverness county has not been specially mentioned and writes to the Chronicle thus:

The Government of Nova Scotia ought to appoint without delay an independent and intelligent commission of expert miners to visit and examine all the coal mines of Inverness county, in order to see and say what is the matter with them. I would ask that this commission take particular pains to ascertain and examine conditions at the Inverness colliery. It is not when a mine collapses that steps should be taken to preserve it. Rather than have all these mines idle the government itself should take and operate them.

There is no necessity for such a commission to take particular pains to ascertain and examine conditions at the Inverness colliery. Such a request is a slur on the Mines Department. The Department may not have officers with time to enquire into such matters as transportation, coal prices, wages, etc., but it has officers who should be able to give all needed information as to conditions in the mine, and any obstacle that stands in the way of, or renders impossible, enlarged production, and that the Record thinks is what the writer of the extract is after.

The writer above quoted tells us:

There is a good coal mine at Port Hood, a good coal mine at Mabou, a good coal mine at Inverness, a good coal mine at St. Rose and a good coal mine at Chimney Corner. All of these are idle, except the mine at Inverness, and that one appears to be getting notably out of wind. It is known all over Canada that these mines are idle. Is it good statesmanship to allow them thus to remain?

It may not be good statesmanship. An old rhyme runs:—

“Oh for the want of pocket money and for the want of cash

Many a bonnie laddie wants his bonnie lass.”

And there is no doubt it is for a similar reason the local government does not lend money to open the mines and the federal government does not build a railway to transport the products.

Than F. W. Gray, of the Dominion Coal company's staff there is no man better able to write in a luminous way on the merits of the Dominion Steel and Dominion Coal companies' combined scheme, and the Compensation Act. We do not except the Compensation board as a whole or any individual member thereof. Some Record readers may be under the impression that the acceptance of the combined scheme means a full contracting out of the Compensation Act. Let Mr Gray speak:

It has been made to appear that the workmen of these companies voted for the retention of the Relief Societies as against the Workmen's Compensation Act. Mr. Douglas is reported as “pointing out the superiorities of the Workmen's Compensation Act, which he said would add at least \$50,000 annually to the expenditures of the Coal company, and accounted for their opposition.” The only meaning one can extract from this is, is that the Coal company is endeavoring to withhold from its workmen the benefits of the Compensation Act, and to substitute some compromise. What are the actual facts?

The contracting-out scheme on which the workmen voted, and gave a favorable decision of three to one, provides that the workmen shall receive ALL the benefits of the Compensation Act, PLUS a donation from the company to the Sickness Fund of 25 cents per month per man, or at least \$30,000 per year.

The added expense of the Workmen's Compensation Act to the company will be very much more than the \$50,000 named by Mr. Douglas. It will be nearer \$200,000, and in addition as a free gift, the company offer \$30,000 to the Sickness Fund.

The only point in which the contracting-out scheme differs from the Compensation Act is in the matter of administration. It is proposed that the payment of compensation for accident shall be administered by a Board on which workmen and company are equally represented, and that in case of