

- Rubs by Rambler.

A Glace Bay correspondent of several of the newspapers makes a very good point in dealing with the coal operators conspiracy case now being tried in Halifax. Addressing the 'district executive' the correspondent says: "What you and those you try to represent have to sell is your labor. What the operators have to sell is their coal. Yet you are prosecuting the operators for doing the very thing you have combined for and pledged yourselves to do, viz: sell what you have for sale at the highest possible figure. What are the men thinking about that they cannot see the cloven hoof. Why, all other classes of labor, all other classes of capital, and the public generally, have never sought to strike the miners such a dastardly blow, as this alleged, international union now posing to be their saviours." Yes it is one of the strangest and most astonishing things that has happened in the history of coal mining in the province to find a professed union man—an official in what certain untravelling people call a great union—acting as prosecutor in a case charging the N. S. operators for conspiracy to put up and keep up the price of coal. It almost passes belief. A trades union is supposed to exist chiefly to maintain and increase the wages of its members. It is well known to all observers that wages and prices are closely connected. If prices tumble so do wages and if prices go up so do wages when there is an alert union. Had a manufacturer or a merchant been the informer there would have been cause for surprise, to say that action was taken by a trades unionist caps the climax, and makes one wonder at the things, passing strange, that some people will do. In what marked contrast is the action of the U. M. W. with that of the P. W. A. In the eighties owing to cut throat competition and consequent cheap coal, wages of colliery workers in Cape Breton were very low. The operators were rated year by year for selling their coals so low. Still they continued to sell low in competition. At a fall annual meeting of the P. W. A. it was resolved that notice be sent to the operators that in the ensuing spring an increase in rates would be expected, that the operators could keep cutting away at their own throats if they choose, but the operatives would no longer suffer cut throat wages. The notice was given the operators in the fall so that they would regulate the selling price of coal accordingly. What was the consequence? Up went the price of coal in the Spring to the railways, and up went the miners rates, and that without any further request than had been made in the fall.

I take it that the U. M. W. have given up all hope of being successful in Nova Scotia, and that they are bound in their retreat to do as much ugly work as lies in their power. Only on this ground can their conduct in prosecuting the coal operators for conspiracy be accounted for. If they thought they might have the least chance of winning out they certainly would never have been so foolish as to institute so stupid proceedings. It takes ones imagination to suppose that the U. M. Ws. can ever obtain a footing in this province, yet let us try to suppose that they capture a small

locality, under the promise of securing better wages. They go to the operators of that colliery and demand higher rates. Instantly they are met with the rejoinder: "You are surely joking; you mean that I shall lower the rate. That must be your demand surely for you have charged us with selling too dearly. Our prices have been reduced and wages must follow. You see I am following out your own principles. You believe in cheap coal; that can only, as you are perfectly well aware, be obtained by reduced rates of wages." What answer could the U. M. Ws. make to this plea of the operator. The U. M. Ws. would rightly be hoisted with their own petard.

There are some people, vain fellows, who much prefer the kisses of an enemy to the wounds of a friend. The editor of the RECORD is not of that kind. He accepts the wound of a friend if not with avidity, with patient submission. Indeed at times he rolls the criticisms of his friends as sweet morsels under his tongue. The Post's ante mortem biography of the RECORD editor is so gentlemanly and so delicately worded that it would be childish to show disapproval. The RECORD editor reads the Post, of course. Anything light is to his liking, and the Post is all that can be desired in that line. Its editorials are really amusing. It tells its readers that the editor of the RECORD attained his present eminence by 'tortuous paths'. The Post is vigorously scrambling up and along tortuous paths—and here comes in the difference—but is making no real progress, and is as far from the eminence, the goal of its ambition, as at the start. The Post gravely assures the RECORD editor that 'the miners of Cape Breton who belong to the union of United Mine Workers do not read the RECORD.'—Surely the Post is not cowardly in omitting to give the foreign society its proper name, the name is the United Mine Workers of America, meaning the United States.—The Post may be right in saying the U. M. Ws. of C. B. do not read the RECORD, and that may in part account for the fact that so many of them are laboring under a foolish delusion. The Post means us to draw the inference that the U. M. Ws. of C. B. read the Post. To that fact also is due in part the number of men who so foolishly struck work when they had no grievances.

I wonder if the Post will answer a simple question or two. The Post makes the boast that all along, during this scandalous U. M. W. business, the course it has pursued has been OPEN. Mark the word 'open'. The proprietor of a paper is presumed to dictate the papers policy. That at any rate is the rule in Nova Scotia. We answer the Post by saying that its course has not been open but marked by the grossest duplicity. Will the Post kindly tell its readers where McLaughlan got the information that enabled him to swear that the coal operators were members of a conspiracy? Will the Post tell its readers the name of the Sydney man who immediately on his arrival in Halifax was pounced upon by the Free Coal League? Will the Post tell us the name of the man who is trying to settle an old score by putting the coal companies to a lot of trouble and expense, with no end to serve but spite.

Hypnotized is the fittest word that can be employed in referring to the men who are still idle in C. B., at the bidding of the U. M. W. and of those who think that the U. M. W. has had the better of the so