

AROUND THE COLLIERIES.

There is a big mining boom on in Cape Breton these days and it is not confined to the exploitation of one mineral alone, but extends to many, coal, iron, magnesite, silicate, lead, copper and even zinc. The boom covers Inverness, Richmond and Cape Breton counties. In Cape Breton county iron and copper are the minerals sought after. At Grand Mira seven-teen square miles have been taken out for iron ore. In Richmond, besides copper, lead and allied minerals, iron is being sought for under not only right of search but lease. In Inverness, near Orangedale and River Denys, five square miles are under license for magnesite, nine leases have been taken out for coal, and also about twenty square miles are covered by rights of search. At Skye Glen and mountain rights and leases covering many square miles have been covered for iron, and silicate. It is said the areas containing the silicate are likely to be purchased by New York capitalists. A New York man has obtained rights of search for iron near Whycoemagh, and there is active iron ore exploitation at Glencoe. Inverness is the Nova Scotia Eldorado. Indeed, to use an expressive, if hackneyed phrase, Inverness county, so far as prospecting for minerals of all sorts goes, is having the time of its life. The Record has always maintained that Inverness was possibly the county richest in minerals in Nova Scotia, and our hope is that the search for minerals now being prosecuted, will emphasize our opinion.

The Nova Scotia Steel and Coal Company has taken out rights over five square miles in the vicinity of Orangedale, and are shipping a new mineral, as far as Nova Scotia is concerned, called magnesite—magnesium carbonate—to their plant at Sydney Mines. One of the purposes for which this mineral is used is the lining of the bottom of blast furnaces, but it may have other uses. It is said to be very valuable, and has not hitherto been mined in the province. A fair deposit was found when operations began. At present the mineral is found in patches. It is the intention to sink a few hundred feet in expectation of securing the mineral in larger quantity. Should the sinking not fulfil expectations, trials will be made in other parts of the covered territory, as the mineral shows in several places. Text books on the minerals of the province give no indications of the purposes for which magnesite is employed. We shall endeavor to obtain some information on the subject.

It is reported that the mine at New Campbellton, formerly worked by the Burchells and sold a few years ago to the Harmsworths, ostensibly for the production of coal for their big pulp works in Newfoundland, is to be reopened this summer. The high price of coal and its scarcity are evidently to have an effect in the direction of extended coal mining development.

The trio composing the visible heads of the Greenwood Coal Company, Pictou county, are evidently hustlers and ambitious. Not content with having made terms for the opening up of the Port Hood areas, they have secured at least a half, possibly a controlling, interest in the Mabou mine. The mine was put up at sheriff's sale lately to satisfy a claim of the Eastern Trust Co. and the three said heads of the Greenwood concern, in some way unknown to outsiders, satisfied the claim with concurrence of the proprietor of the mine. The fact that a practical mining man like Malcolm Beaton takes interest in Mabou will have the tendency to draw attention to the possibilities of the mine, for the Record takes it that the Greenwood Coal Company has not acquired Mabou for the purpose of present development, but to induce intending coal operators to look in Mabou direction. Mabou, the Record considers, an excellent proposition. Its great handicap is the lack of proper transportation. It may be possible to make a shipping port, or connect it with the Inverness Railway.

The coal recently discovered at River Denys is four feet eight inches thick. Four feet of this is clean coal, with eight inches of fireclay in the middle of the seam. Some say that the coal is semi-anthracite, others that it is bituminous. It is to be hoped that it is the latter, as all the anthracites and semi-anthracite coals so far alleged to have been found in Cape Breton have turned out to be—well—frauds.

According to the Mines Report, the fatal accidents at the coal mines for the fiscal year ending September, 1916, numbered 28. This is a gratifying decrease over the figures for the year preceding when the number was 42. The report places the number of fatal accidents at 29, but we deduct the accident to a boy killed while searching for a lost ball with a lighted match in an old slope, and thereby causing an explosion of gas. We cannot place that death in the table of those lost in the cutting and preparation, or production, of coal. Falls of roof were responsible for 11 deaths, while trips and boxes have to be debited with no fewer than thirteen. Four accidents were from out of the ordinary causes.

Though for the calendar year 1916 there was a decrease in shipments of over half a million tons as compared with 1915, curiously for the fiscal year ending September, 1916, there was an increase of some eighty thousand tons.

In 1916 there was thirty-three per cent more coal sold in Nova Scotia than in 1915. This gives indication that there was unusual activity at the big steel plants and other manufacturing industries of the province.

The Dominion Steel Corporation's and the Dominion Coal Company's combined sickness and ac-