

ed in this province becomes a permanent industry—and I have every hope for and faith in it—and with the starting of the plate mill at Sydney—which is one of the finest plants in America—we have an assurance that there must follow a largely increased demand for coal. . . . Industries are on the increase, and the more of these the larger the demand. I have not the slightest doubt, unless some abnormal situation arises, the demand for the St. Lawrence will be so active that it will not be a question of markets, but of the ability of the province to supply the demand for her coal. You have read, no doubt, of the probable advance in the price of American coal of \$1.25 per ton. I think the day when Nova Scotia coal will go into the Montreal market and require to compete with American coal at \$2.50 a ton will never return. I believe the railway and mining conditions in the United States will make it impossible for U. S. operators to compete with Nova Scotia on anything like the old terms. It does seem rather an anomaly that with the New England States at our door, and with the St. Lawrence open to us, that American coal should be used to the extent it is in Montreal and perhaps even farther west."

(The Commissioner then dissected the tables in the Mines Report, giving the production per man for the year and expressing disappointment with the figures. The Record is glad that the Commissioner took his courage in both hands and set down the reduction to its proper source. One of the leaders of the U.M.W. lately declared that they had fulfilled their pact to increase production. They did so "with a hook," as the boys say. The following remarks on this point by the Commissioner throws contempt on the boast.)

"The number of men employed in 1919 exceeded the number in 1918 by 352 and yet the total days worked in 1919 was less by 73,068. This number of days lost multiplied by the average production per man will about account for the actual decrease in production. I say that is not a satisfactory showing. It is unfortunate that with a greater number of men employed the number of mining days worked was smaller. One can only attribute this to an undue amount of absenteeism, or holidays, more than there should have been."

THE PRICE OF COAL

Says the Sydney Post: "Within the past few months the Coal Company has increased the price to consumers by \$1.40 a ton; 60 cents a ton being the first increase. This was put into effect before the McKinnon Conciliation Board award was announced. Citizens claim that the readjustment of wages given the miners does not warrant such extravagant increase in price. The city council is to be asked to take the matter up and see if something cannot be done."

Commenting on the above a contemporary says: When, however, the explanation is glibly given by some of the Company's underlings that any such

raise is attributable to the increased wage paid to employees a protest is in order, and an investigation as contemplated by the City Council is certainly needed. We do not see how it will be possible for the Council to get at the records to learn whether any such increase was justified or not, but Mr. Silby Barrett, a bright and shining light in U. M. W. circles, has stated that the levelling of wages recently arranged (McKinnon award) represented a cost of about 23 cents per ton. There is an enormous difference between \$1.40 and 23 cents. Can it be possible that the Dominion Coal Co., Ltd., have been discounting the Truro Convention and any further demands their employees see fit to make? If so, it implies a condition of affairs where Capital and Labor join hands to exploit the public. We do not, as a matter of fact, think such is the case. We believe the Company will show fight if further demands for wage increases are formulated, but there is no getting away from the fact that the Company by their actions are inciting their men to forward action. It is only natural, when coal jumps \$1.40 a ton, that Labor should demand its share of the plunder. The men have been very modest under the circumstances."

The Record at this time has no intention of entering into any controversy as to coal prices. We would like, however, to quote a short sentence from the speech of the Commissioner of Mines. Here it is: "The time may come when exports of Nova Scotia coal will have to be prohibited." Exports of course to foreign countries. To some the sentence may appear wholly irrelevant to the subject of coal prices. Is it really so? On the export or non-export of coal depends much the price to N. S. consumers. Cut off at once the export, cut them off at any time before the Montreal market is fully recovered, and what then. Then follows slack times, or a slump in the price of coal, or, and a decided slump in wages. The one question the Record would ask and possibly one or two question are involved in the one is, "are the mine operators in the business for profit, are they in it for the best profit they can honestly make? If the answer, or answers, are in the affirmative why can they be blamed if they prefer to export coal, at a price higher than can be obtained in the home or Canadian market? If the company can sell all their output at a higher figure than they charge in the home market, and refrain from doing so in the interests of Nova Scotia are they not rather worthy of praise than of blame? Must the old saying "business is business" undergo modifications to make itself commendable to changing and changing ideas, and conditions? From the Sydney Post we make further extracts which almost go to show that any investigation on the part of the Sydney Town Council, is a work of supererogation—to use a word the writer has not heard for an indefinite number of years.

"Discussing the recent increase of 80 cents per ton in the price of coal announced a few days ago by the Dominion Coal Company, Silby Barrett, international board member of the United Mine Workers, district 26, declared that such an increase was away out of proportion to the recent wage increases granted the miners.

"The miners were given approximately 23 cents