

## MARITIME MINING RECORD.

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## *- Rubs by Rambler.*

A few weeks ago the obliging Keir Hardie came all the way from Halifax to Glace Bay, to tell the miners of that section, of the beauties of affiliation. It was rather a strange subject for him to take, seeing there was no movement or agitation of any kind in favor of affiliation. There was a secession movement; there were some who wished the P. W. A. to sink itself, and be swallowed up, in a foreign organization which, up to date, has not done nearly so effective work as the P. W. A. Had the U. M. W. been half wakened in the U. S.; had it not made the accumulation of strike funds its great object; had it, rather, striven towards getting laws passed that would have tended to the safety and comfort of its members, it might not be said, as it is to-day, that more men are slaughtered in the coal mines of the United States, than in any other coal mining country in the world. That by the way. To return to Keir Hardie. In order to demonstrate to his hearers the great benefits resulting from affiliation and federation, Mr. Hardie said that by these means they, the federationists, had been successful in establishing a minimum wage of 6/6 in Britain. I am surprised that some one of his hearers did not shout out: "Ah, but we got fifty per cent. better than 6/6 here." An issue or two back I showed that Mr. Hardie was incorrect in his statement, as to the minimum wage, and I am going now to rub it in. Since then I have read in the radical Weekly Mail where a meeting was held in a district in Scotland in an effort to secure higher rates for cutting. The chief speaker said that the average wage in this particular district was 5/5 or say \$1.30 per day. It is fair to assume that if the average wage in a colliery is 5/5, the minimum wage must be considerably less, not more than 4/6, or say \$1.08 per day. If this is the state of affairs in some parts of Scotland the case for affiliation and federation falls to the ground. Further I read of the desire for a conference to discuss the question of a 6/6 minimum wage. If that wage has already been set, as a minimum, what's the need of a conference? There are strikes in the Lanark and Fifeshire districts, and the officials of the Union in Ayrshire have quite a crop of complaints of not being able

to earn wages. Putting the very best face on it this means that the men are not able to make 6/6 per day, or say, \$1.50. Mr. Hardie thinks that a wage of \$1.50 is something to chuckle over, and something to thank affiliation and federation for. Well, the miners here, without these lauded systems, have a wage ranging from 30 to 75 per cent. higher than Hardie's wage, so Mr. Hardie better come back and throw a little more light on the supposed benefits sure to follow from affiliation and federation. If he succeeds in this he might proceed to show wherein affiliation and absorption are one and the same thing, and how there can be 'federation' in view of the fact that if the P. W. A. go over to the U. M. W. there will be but one body—the American U. M. W.

If the minimum wage is 6/6 what of this paragraph:

"The section in Montgomeryfield Pit who a week ago were clamoring to stop work have agreed before stopping to give it a further trial. A section in No. 11 Kenneths also complain, their average earnings being about 4s. 4d. per day. The union agents are investigating before deciding on further action."

And what of this. Surely Mr. Hardie did not attempt wilfully to mislead:

"All the districts of Mid and East Lothian were fully represented at a meeting held in the miners' offices at Dalkeith on Saturday. Mr. George Young, Newbyres, presided. Additional interest was caused in the proceedings by the intimation of the threatened reduction of the wages' scale of the Scottish colliers. Mr. Robert Brown, the Scottish miners' secretary, having read the communication from Mr. Robert Baird, the coalmasters' secretary, proceeded to criticise the proposal. He said that the employers, having asked for a reduction of 3d. per day, placed the Scottish miners, in his opinion, in even a more critical condition than had obtained since the big strike of 1894, as this proposed reduction brought the wages down to 6s. per day, which the Scottish miners had determined was to be the minimum, below which they would not work in the future. He wished it to be noted that the employers had steadfastly refused to grant this 6s. minimum in times past."

While we, as Nova Scotians, are proud of our advanced mining legislation we are scarcely vain enough to take credit for that which we have not yet attained. The Canadian Mining Review, like its predecessor, is not at all times correct in its references to Nova Scotia. In a late issue it gives us credit for a law regulating 'child' labor which would place the province in the van of any nation in the world. We quote:

"No boy under the age of sixteen is permitted to work below ground, and no boy between the ages of twelve and sixteen years is permitted to work above ground unless he can furnish a certificate from a duly qualified principal to the effect that he is able to read and write, and is familiar with the rules of arithmetic as far as and including division. No woman or girl of any age is permitted to be employed in the workings of any mine."

It might be well for the 'general future' not to be more specific, of the boys that they were not permitted in a mine before fourteen or fifteen,