

that the high cost of the "necessities," was the cause of much distress among the workmen. He drew what was intended for a harrowing tale, but the attempt was a failure, simply because he painted in far too dark colors. The Record unhesitatingly asserts that there never was a time during the past forty years at least, when there was less visible distress, due to poverty, or cost of living. The evidence of one's eyes points to a wholly different conclusion than a prevalence of "poorthing." The number of automobiles alone gives ample contradiction. "Oh," it may be said, "but those are not owned by workmen." But, indeed, a great number are. In a small town in Pictou county there are over a score of automobiles owned by workmen—in the accepted sense—or workmen's sons. And, further, all the movies in the country are doing a roaring trade. Distress! Why there is none of it through poverty. Mr. Marnoch says his sympathies are always with the miners, because they are fellow citizens, and not much for the operators, because they are outsiders. Outsiders or not, they must be treated squarely, else others who might come from the outside and invest capital and give employment be hindered. In the third paragraph Mr. Marnoch offsets this criticism by saying a kind word about the operators.

"It is rather curious to look at our attitude in Lethbridge to the present situation in regard to the production of coal. We have been looking at the long drawn out negotiations between the miners and the operators in a far-off and disinterested fashion, until within the last few days it has dawned on us that the lack of steam coal for plowing and breaking outfits on our farms is going to have a very serious effect on the production of crops. And this is not a matter of selfish interest for this community; for all through this district we have from the first taken a very serious view of our responsibilities to Canada and Great Britain and our allies; and we know very well that what is expected of us at home here is that we shall all do our utmost in helping in the production of foodstuffs.

In so far as we have any interest as between the operators and the miners, our sympathies are always first with the miners; they are our fellow citizens, and we are sharing their difficulties in regard to the cost of living; whereas we are not liable to be very sympathetic with the owners of the coal mines, who send their money here for investment, and who withdraw their dividends from the community if they do not use them in further development of the mines.

While the operators and the miners were talking in such a way as to indicate that they were likely to reach an agreement, we were not thinking very much about the matter, although we have been rather inclined to think that the miners were exaggerating the increases in the cost of living; while at the same time we have had reason to feel grateful to the mine owners because they have up till now only asked us to pay 25 cents a ton more for coal than we previously paid, while we know that the recent increases in wages and equipment have cost them a good deal more than that.

We are only too painfully aware of the increase in the cost of living ourselves; but we also know that everybody here can be fully employed and can make the most of his time in earning money. There is no slack time for the miners or anybody else, and

there should be no slack time if we are doing our duty in the great work that is before us all. There is no slack time, and no time is spent up at the front in any other than one kind of striking.

The statements as to the increased cost of living especially when we remind ourselves that the steadiness of employment acts as an offset, comparing past conditions with the present, calls to mind the story about the English traveller who had returned from India. He was telling some old Scotsmen about his hunting experiences, and he said he had killed a tiger, forty feet long. This was too much for Sandy Macpherson, who drily remarked that some Aberdeen fishermen had lately brought in a skate half an acre in size. The Englishman was mortally offended, left the room, and sent Sandy a challenge to fight a duel. Sandy took that proposal very calmly and told the messenger that if the Englishman would take a few feet off the tiger he would see what could be done about the size of the skate.

That is about what the general public feels in regard to our miners' statements about the cost of living; and the general public also feels that it is in no humor for looking on at a duel, when many of our nearest and dearest are engaged in a life and death struggle for our liberty; and at a time when it is up to each one of us to do everything in our power to help them, and rather suffer something ourselves, than to do anything that will hinder them in the slightest in their splendid efforts.

If the miners will but look at the matter in that light they will not lose a moment in getting back to work; and they need not then fear that public sympathy will be lacking in giving them reasonable and proper help in getting the wages they are entitled to. But the circumstances are far too serious for any right thinking fellow citizen of ours to be justified in stopping work just now.

• Rubs by Rambler. •

From the composition of the Shipbuilding Commission one is forced to the conviction that Premier Murray recognizes that \$2,000,000 divided into five would be no real inducement for steel shipbuilders to erect plants in Nova Scotia, while that sum divided among two dozen wooden shipbuilders, or builders of wooden ships, might give that line of industry an impetus that would bring back to the province some of its famous pristine wooden ships glory.

The Manchester Guardian and other British papers are of opinion that it should be a very easy matter to pacify Quebec. Why, of course, one of the easiest things imaginable. Since Confederation Quebec has been cuddled, crooned over, caressed and got everything she cried for, and all that is necessary is to give her everything she demands,—and more. Is that all? Ah, well, perhaps not; it is a big job to please a spoiled child, especially when it has wit enough to discern that there is keen competition for the privilege of dandling her.