

es rest, and a rope is also fastened to each skid or runner on which the cross pieces lie. The raft when loaded is launched and floated out to the end of the wall. By means of the rope attached to each, the cross ties are removed permitting the mattresses to fall between the parallel stringers. Then the stringers are removed. When in exact line the mattresses are sunk by stones being placed upon them. Great stones are gathered along the coast and conveyed by scows, fitted with cranes, to the wall. Of course the work could be more expeditiously done if there was a steam derrick or two, but the annual amount granted toward construction will not permit the contractors going to the expense. This is the third year in which work has been in progress. The writer may have had doubts as to the feasibility of the undertaking. He may be now willing to admit that the undertaking is practicable, but has not altered his opinion that it will not soon be done after the present fashion. Too much money has already been expended to permit of the government drawing back. If then the work must be proceeded with pottering should be done away with. A dole of fifteen thousand a year will scarcely suffice to have the work finished in a score of years. Let the grant be made fifty thousand dollars a year and four years will see the work finished. A proper plant could then be obtained and the work thereby hastened. The distance between the mainland and Port Hood Island is 5,000 feet—not quite a mile—and at no point on the course across is the water of a depth to retard steady progress. There should on the part of the people of Port Hood be a unanimous insistence for a larger yearly grant, if not for a grant sufficient, for the completion of the undertaking—in one slump sum.

## ***= Rubs by Rambler.***

'Roundsmen' in the Halifax Herald referring to an article in a previous Record re the price of coal opens a criticism by remarking "The wage excuse for the increased price of coal to consumers is not a new one." Why should Roundsmen use the word excuse. The Record has never sought to make excuses on behalf of the operators for increased price of coal, it has had reasons sufficient to present justification. The trouble with those who are losing avoirdupois, through exciting themselves over the increased cost of coal is that they never chance to see the figures produced in print showing cause for the increase. Even in the Herald figures have been printed which should satisfy the ordinary reasonable mortal. Roundsmen in no seemingly, carping spirit asks that the Record answers certain questions though, at the same time, he makes it clear that the request is of a formal nature, as he, while asking for information, gives it as his strong opinion that if the real facts were known it would be found that the lion's share of the increase in prices went into the coffers, to put it shortly, of the coal operators. That is scarcely fair on the part of Roundsmen. He admits he does not know the facts and yet he forms an opinion which will

scarcely be removed no matter how strong the adverse evidence. Roundsmen must surely have guessed he was putting a question impossible of definite answer, when he asks "Will the Record please state what proportion of the colliery workers of Nova Scotia are making twice the wages they did four or five years ago?" Before I could answer so big a question I would require to have access to all the pay rolls of all the coal operators in the province, and though I have always found the operators willing to comply with reasonable requests I would scarcely dare to proffer so comprehensive a one. However, so that Roundsmen may not go away wholly empty handed I will make answer in part. The average wage of the total of the miners employed by the Cumberland Railway & Coal Co. in 1899 was \$1.90 per day. For 1905 the average of all the miners was \$2.97 per day, or an increase of 56% not taking into account any addition to wages made by steadier work in 1905. Roundsmen must admit that is a genuine increase. Taking one of the large collieries on the I. and I find that twelve fairly representative miners worked in the year 1898 a total of 2959 days, earning for the year \$5,001.70 or an average per day of \$1.69 5-6. These same men in 1905 worked only 2902 days and yet made \$7,502.96, or an average of \$2.58 1/2 per day or an increase of 52%. So much for the miners at points in two of the mining counties. Now for the mechanics. At Springhill the increase, in wages, is 54% over 1899. In one of the large collieries in C. B. the increase in wages 1905 over 1898 is no less than 70% taking the wages of the same six men in these years as a basis. In other words while the average wage of mechanics was in 1898 \$1.22 1/2 per day it was in 1905 \$2.10 1/2. In the case of five representative blacksmiths the increase is from an average of \$1.10 to \$1.85 and a fraction or say 70% increase. The increase in unskilled labor has not been so great in all cases, but still the increase is from 20 to 30 per cent. I hope Roundsmen is not wearing a mask only of fairness. I am led to doubt his entire sincerity from the fact that he states:—"There are those who claim that coal has increased 100 per cent since 1899 and they have produced some stubborn figures in support of that contention." Will the Herald writer be good enough to reproduce the figures. Whether he be a married man or a single, there is no excuse for him swallowing such a statement. If he is a householder and has lived in, say, Truro he will know that coal has not advanced so much in price; if he be a boarder he might have asked his landlady. To the people generally, to householders, the price at the mine has been increased a trifle over fifty per cent. In the last dozen years I have not bought Acadia coal under \$2.25, the present price is \$3.50, an increase of say 55 per cent., and what applies to the Acadia applies with equal force to nearly all the collieries on the Mainland and Island. If the middlemen are raiding the pockets of the consumers, how should the operators be held accountable.

Before I could reply to all the peoples, persons, and things who call upon me to prove this thing or disprove that other, I would need a newspaper all to myself. Until trade in this line grows slacker I will have to deny myself what I greatly delight in,—a few friendly 'tiffs'. Just a word acknowledging the attentions of a miner, writing in Monday's Herald from Sydney Mines. The Herald's headlines would lead one to believe that a fiery Scotsman was mercilessly scalping me. On the contrary there is nothing acrimonious in his letter. If this Scottish miner hits hard, he hits clean, and that's the sort of chappie I like. He seemingly knows more of