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## The Canadian Mining Journal

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### SIXTEEN MINERS KILLED AT NANAIMO.

Sixteen miners lost their lives on the morning of Tuesday, September 10th, when the cage in which they were descending the Protection Island Shaft of the Canadian Western Fuel Co.'s Mine, Nanaimo, B.C., became detached from its cable and fell a distance of approximately 300 feet. The cage had raised all the men of the night shift to the surface and carried six loads of sixteen down when the accident happened. It had scarcely left on its seventh trip when the cable parted, the miners still waiting their turn being informed of what had taken place by seeing the parted cable, released of its load, swinging loose in the shaft. Subsequently it developed that the safety locks had failed to act and that the cage had struck the loading landing, constructed of twelve-inch timbers, with such force that it went through, finally resting 50 feet lower on an abandoned level not used since the upper seam was opened some years ago.

This is the most serious coal mine disaster that has occurred in British Columbia since early in the month of April, 1917, when 34 miners lost their lives in an explosion at the Coal Creek Mines, Crows Nest Pass Colliery, Fernie. Hon. Wm. Sloan, Minister of Mines, has promised that the fullest investigation will be made in order that the responsibility may be fixed.

### NO MORE CHEAP COAL

Having in mind the great need for increasing production of coal, it is distressing to learn that miners are idle in coal mining districts in Nova Scotia and British Columbia. In view of the high cost of living, it is natural to expect that high wages must be paid, and it is not surprising that some workers are ready to take advantage of the shortage of labor to demand higher wages than the conditions warrant. It is regrettable that in Pictou and Fernie valuable time has been lost by the men going on strike and showing an unwillingness to do their part towards keeping production of coal from falling below the already disappointing level. Coal miners, or any other men, who quit at this time, when so much depends on the maintaining of the output of munitions of war, need not be surprised if their actions bring public disfavor.

We are pleased to learn as we go to press that the Pictou miners have agreed to return to work, and we hope that the miners in the Fernie district will soon find it possible to do likewise. We have no doubt that the majority of miners on strike regret that they have given the public such a bad impression by their action.

There can be little doubt that coal miners have been justified in asking for higher wages than they received a few years ago. They are now, however, receiving much higher wages. We believe that coal miners deserve higher wages for their hard and dangerous work than workmen who have easier and safer occupations and we hope that the very low wages of pre-war days will never return. We have, however, little sympathy for the men who seek to take advantage of present conditions to force, by strikes, unreasonably high wages regardless of the effect of their action on the war effort.

The low wages that prevailed in coal mining regions in former years were largely due to the low prices at which coal has been sold. We believe that investigation will show that coal has for years been selling at too low a price in North America. The men who mine the coal deserve more than they have received for their labor, and the men who supplied the money for the industry deserve more than they have received for the use of the money. The capital invested in mines and plants is very large and the dividends small. Consequently, the industry has been unable to give high wages to miners. The whole matter needs adjustment and it looks as though adjustment may come soon. Undoubtedly the public will have to pay more for coal than in the pre-war days.

One natural result of higher price for coal will be higher wages to coal miners. Another good result will be more complete utilization of our water powers. Both are things much to be desired.