

FREDERICK W. HENSHAW, of the City and District of Montreal, General Commission Merchant; Agent for the Sydney and Louisburg Coal and Railway Company; Reserve Mines, Cape Breton and Nova Scotia, sworn :

By Mr. BOIVIN —

Q.—There have been complaints made before this Board, that a great deal of coal, after it has left the public scales, is lost on the street. Can you tell us if that is the truth; and if so, what remedy would you suggest? A.—I believe it is the case—in fact I have no doubt at all that there is more or less of the coal lost after the carters leave the scales with their loads, and before it gets to its destination; and the farther it is carted the greater the loss. I think that that loss arises from two causes—one from the overloading of the carts, and the other that there are boys and people nearly always following behind the carts; and the carter will sometimes throw off a piece of coal to the boys, which is readily seized upon, placed in a small box or cart, or basket, and carried home. I do not say that it is a universal practice, but it is done; and I have seen it done. The amount of loss from this cause, I do not suppose is very great. The loss is chiefly from over-loading the carts.

Q.—Could you suggest any plan to remedy the evil first spoken of by you, namely, the over-loading of the carts? A.—The only remedy is to have a cart sufficiently large to prevent the coal from falling out. The fact is, the cart is not quite so large as some of the stevedores' tubs, used in hoisting the coal out of the ship's hold. From these tubs it is dumped into the carts, which are waiting alongside. The carts should be sufficiently large to prevent the coal from falling off; and there should be a guard around the edge four or five inches higher than the coal.

By Mr. McLEAN :—

Q.—Is the loss sustained while the coal is being carried from the coal ships to the coal dealers, or while it is being carried from the coal dealers' yards to others? A.—It is lost while being carried from the scales after having been weighed by the public weigher.

Q.—Cannot you put them in sacks, they do it in other cities? A.—No. Except at retail, that is an impossibility because the utmost they can do is to receive it right off the ship into the cart.

By Mr. BOIVIN :—

Q.—How would you remedy the evil of the loss of coal while it is proceeding from the coal merchant's yard to the consumer. How would you prevent the drivers from throwing it to boys? A.—If it was possible for the Police to be on hand it could not occur, but that is an impossibility, as they cannot follow every cart, or be in view of every cart.

Q.—Can you tell us if soft coal is cheaper to day compared to what it was ten years ago? A.—Yes. It is from fifty to seventy-five per cent cheaper.

Q.—Do you know anything about hard coal? A.—No. I do not know anything about hard coal; all that I know about hard coal is that I buy it for my own use, and that I pay more for it now, than I did before the duty of sixty-cents a ton was taken off. When that duty was taken off of coal it was supposed to be for the benefit of the people but instead of that they have put up the price. My coal costs me to day—hard coal—more than it ever did before, and I think that it was a great misfortune that the duty was ever taken off.

Q.—Please explain that? A.—I say that since the duty was taken off, the dealers have put it in their own pockets instead of giving the benefit to the people.

By Mr. ARMSTRONG :—

Q.—Does the same amount of loss in the carrying of coal take place while it