

official figures, we gather that the total shipment of Nova Scotia coal for 1904 was 4,622,823 tons, a decrease of 27,890 tons from the previous year.

The total out-put of the Dominion Coal Company last year was 3,023,522 tons, a decrease of nearly 100,000 tons as compared with 1903. The Nova Scotia Steel and Coal Company, operating the old Sydney Mines, in Cape Breton, and the Marsh Mine, in Pictou County, shipped a total of 496,751 tons, an increase of 44,768 tons, while the Cumberland Railway and Coal Company's shipments showed a decrease of 1,858 tons.

The shipments of the Acadia Coal Company fell off to 255,133 tons, a decrease of 82,100 tons. This may be accounted for by the developing operations now on hand at this property, which are of an extensive and important character. Two vertical pits are being sunk, which have already reached a depth of over 600 feet. These will make available the thick seams of high grade coal, which have been partially worked from other points. It is expected that coal will be hoisted from these pits before the end of the current year.

The Intercolonial Coal Company, which is a progressive and well-managed enterprise, increased its shipments 10,088 tons, bringing the total for the year up to 242,144 tons.

Cumberland County from its several collieries shipped 567,053 tons. The abolition of the duty upon coal going into the United States does not appear to have benefited these collieries, although their shipping ports must be fully 300 miles nearer the New England markets than those of Pictou and Cape Breton. Fires and strikes have of recent years retarded the expansion of Cumberland County's coal trade. The strikes have been effective, as the average wages of coal-cutters at Springhill for the past year was \$2.98 per day, and for the month of December \$3.06. Apparently the miners have taken the bit in their teeth, and are having their own way. During the last strike at Springhill, the manager in defence of the company stated that the miners in certain easy places were earning from \$5 to \$6 per day. This is a confession of his own weakness, or incapacity.

Likewise it is very questionable whether the three years' agreement entered into by the Dominion Coal Company with its employees is creditable to the management, or likely to be satisfactory. Under its operation the company cannot expect to be able to compete in open market, either in New England or Ontario with the cheaply mined coals of the Eastern or Northwestern coal fields of the United States.

The Dominion Coal Company's net earnings were \$135,548 less in 1904 than in the year preceding. The large floating debt of the company was reduced by \$469,118, and the report states that the balance will be shortly consolidated. The most business-like way would be to reduce the enormous capital to something like the actual cash paid in, and raise the required money from shareholders.

The Port Hood Company on an output of 62,335 tons, showed a loss of \$60,062, which is not encouraging. The Inverness Railway & Coal Company tried the experiment of sending coal to Port Arthur and bringing back iron ore to the Nova Scotia furnaces, but evidently the result was unsatisfactory, and the trade will not be attempted again this season.

This question of coal affects Ontario above all other provinces, because it is the only one which is forced to pay the duty on imported coal. To this feature of the coal trade we propose shortly to return.

THE PROPOSED NEW PROVINCES.

The bill to create new provinces in our North-West is now before the House of Commons, and there does not seem to be agreement in the Territories as to the intended boundaries. Nor will Manitoba be satisfied without an extension of her territory, which will give her a port on Hudson Bay. Worth contending for, as these things seem to the dweller in our North-West, there is a matter exceeding them in importance. This is the proposed planting of denominational schools in the provinces to be constituted. It seemed curious, when we remembered the attitude of the Premier and Hon. Mr. Sifton on this question in former years, that they should now favor this retrograde and ill-advised step. But since the news of Mr. Sifton's resignation from the Cabinet, made known on Wednesday, we now see that he cannot stomach the measure. From persons at several points in Assiniboia we learn that any desire which might have existed in favor of separate schools in that territory has about died out in recent years. But the measure now proposed would have the effect of fanning it into life again. The Government cannot afford to disregard the wishes of the people who are to be made citizens of new provinces. And we believe that their wishes are fairly expressed by the territorial premier, Hon. Mr. Haultain, who said a week ago:—

"The principle involved is one of public rights. We asked to be made a Province, with the powers of a Province. We did not ask to be a Province with a large number of restrictions involved in our constitutional act. This may be described as only sentiment, but I consider it is more than sentiment. And, while Sir Wilfrid Laurier dwelt largely on the conditions in Ontario and Quebec, there is no analogy. Upper and Lower Canada voluntarily agreed to the confederation compact, subject to the special condition about separate schools. There is a vast difference between Upper and Lower Canada going voluntarily into confederation with certain conditions attached, and our being created into a Province with those conditions attached."

The bill now before Parliament bears marks of haste, and is by no means a finished production. If it is the intention of the Cabinet to "try it on," for some political purpose, they should be warned by the protests which have already been expressed. However much their proposals may please those who cling to separate schools and wish to impose them on our new and growing West, these proposals do not satisfy the people most concerned. We have strong hopes that the autonomy measure will not be forced on the House in its present form.



STATISTICS ABOUT THE WEST.

We find in some recent blue books figures concerning the grain-growing districts of the West of Canada which will interest our readers. For example, by the last report of the Department of Trade and Commerce we learn that the total number of cars of wheat inspected at Winnipeg in 1903 was 38,473, containing 40,396,650 bushels. In 1902, the figures were 51,833 cars and 51,833,000 bushels, and in 1900, 14,886 cars and only 12,355,380 bushels. Of oats, the number of cars was 1,129, containing 1,693,500 bushels in 1903, 2,036 cars with 3,056,000 bushels in 1902, and 448 cars with 537,000 bushels in 1900. The contrast of these figures help to show the preponderance of wheat in our western grain-growing district.