

The Iron Industry in Nova Scotia.

This industry, in common with the coal trade, has experienced the dullness which has prevailed over the American continent. It is pleasing to note that it has recovered and is at present prosperous.

During the twelve months under review the New Glasgow Iron, Coal and Railway Company has been united with the Nova Scotia Steel Company, the enterprise which Nova Scotians can justly point to as probably the most successful joint stock enterprise ever launched in the province. This company is extending its operations and is supplied with an admirable Bessemer pig from its furnace at Ferrona. The possibility of lengthening the runs of this furnace on steel material is in itself an item of economy, rendered feasible by the growth of the steel works. The furnace was started again in the summer and ready sales of pig are since reported. After a long vacation the Londonderry works went into blast again, and it is reported are contemplating the reopening of their rolling-mill. The large contract secured by this company for the pipes of the new gas company in Halifax will keep their foundry running for some time. The charcoal furnace at Bridgeville, Pictou county, had a short campaign of about a month. As yet, however, the price of charcoal pig has not recovered itself sufficiently to permit of their continuous operation. It may be questioned if the admirable pig made here would be available for steel making, as is the case with some of the better Swedish brands.

The Torbrook mine has been running steadily with a total output of 29,940 tons divided between Londonderry and Ferrona. The vein worked at this mine improves in depth, in quality and thickness, and has been found to extend about three-quarters of a mile to the westward of the present works.

The Nova Scotia Steel Company have suspended operations at their Arisaig mines, having discovered a deposit of iron ore of higher grade at Bell Island, near St. John's, Nfld., which they are opening for shipment next spring.

The production of pig iron stands as follows for the twelve months ended Sept. 30th, 1895, although the output is more truly for the last six months of that period:—

	Tons.
Pictou Charcoal Iron Co.....	323
Nova Scotia Steel Co.	17,321
Londonderry Iron Co.....	11,446
Total.....	29,090

Returns so far received show that during the year there were 79,636 tons of ore mined, of which amount the Charcoal Company, in addition to 598 tons smelted, mined and sold 7,541 tons. There were 36,532 tons of coke reported from the Pictou coal mines and the Ferrona furnace, and about 25,050 tons of limestone quarried.

It is anticipated that the Londonderry and Ferrona furnaces will make a large and steady output for some time; so that next year's operations, which have already made a promising start, will make the best returns yet shown.

Little has been done with any of the other well-known iron deposits of the province. The furnaces are well supplied with ore, and freight considerations prevent much competition for local furnace supplies. Should the scheme of building a blast furnace at St. John be carried out, there is no doubt that the iron ores of the Bay of Fundy will be largely drawn upon, and should the prices of iron in the United States continue to rise, a demand will be made for high grade and conveniently situated ores in Nova Scotia. In this connection may be mentioned the accessible and purer deposits of Torbrook and Nictaux, and the ores lying between Maitland and Windsor.

Coal Mining in Pictou and Cumberland Counties, N.S.

The returns so far as can be gathered at date of writing do not show the coal trade of Cumberland and Pictou as specially flourishing during the twelve months ended September 30th, 1895. The output of the Springhill mines was necessarily interrupted by the destructive bank head fire, and in Pictou county the prevailing dullness of trade, and the keen competition of Cape Breton coal at common points, contributed to keep the production down.

The total sales of Cumberland coal for the year were about 422,210 tons compared with 479,350 tons in 1894, a falling off of 57,140 tons. In Pictou county the sales were about 367,205 tons, as compared with 412,039 tons during the preceding year, a deficiency of 44,834 tons; the total shrinkage in sales for the two counties being about 100,000 tons.

The Londonderry furnaces were idle from Oct. 1st, 1894, to March 9, 1895, and the Ferrona furnace was also out of blast for some time. This lessened the sale of slack for coke and other iron making purposes from both counties. It is anticipated, that the demand for coke will be steady during the winter and that the Cumberland collieries will have to work full time to complete railway stocks and to supply local consumers.

At the Joggins mines operations have been interrupted several times, but attention has been paid to the important matter of having plenty of coal where it can be promptly extracted when needed. At the River Herbert mine Mr. Hall has deepened his slope 200 feet, and expects to work steadily during the winter. At the other small mines, as usual, a few hundred tons are sold during the cold weather. At Springhill the coal has been drawn through the No. 1 or East slope, and a large amount of the coal left years ago in the pillars has been successfully robbed. The bank head at the north slope has been rebuilt and is again in working order. With these two openings the company will be in a position to meet all demands made on it.

In Pictou county work was continued as usual at the Intercolonial Coal Co's mines. A coal washer was put in and other improvements, with a view to reducing working expenses. The Acadia Co. has rebuilt the bank head lost about a year ago, at their Westville mine, and this veteran slope is still turning out a regular supply of its well known fuel. At the Third and McGregor collieries at the Albion mines operations are being continued in the usual quiet style. Operations commenced at some expense in the main seam to the westward of the Foster pit were stopped, as the coal did not prove good enough to work. In the Foord pit workings the fan shaft was made air-tight, and arrangements made for building off a connection with the older workings so that air being excluded the water in these workings could be lowered sufficiently to permit of the workings in the third seam being extended for about 500 feet to the dip. At the Vale colliery work continued dull all the season. The seam has thinned considerably, and proves expensive to work.

American Metallurgy.

The series of lectures entitled "Recent American Methods and Appliances Employed in the Metallurgy of Copper, Lead, Gold and Silver," delivered by Mr. James Douglas before the Society of Arts, and which have been published in the recent issues of the Society's Journal, are full of interest and contain a mass of very useful statistics of costs. Mr. Douglas fully appreciates a fact which is too often overlooked in comparing American methods with English and German methods. He says, "What is true of mechanical appliances is equally so of certain metallurgical processes admittedly American, some of which—while valuable, because peculiarly adapted to local or even special climatic conditions—are not so accurate and economical as to receive