

housing problems are the two knotiest facing Great Britain. Wise employers can do a great deal to improve the condition of their employees and to fire them with an ambition for better things. Two of these had some three hundred girls and women in their company. When they took charge of the business the girls looked tawdry, and the women wore shawls over their heads, after a monstrous fashion in vogue among workingwomen in some of the big towns. The women were asked to discard the shawls, and the girls to brush up a bit. A few complied at once, and all the others soon followed, and now the whole crowd has a respectable, tidy, and thrifty appearance.

## MARITIME MINING RECORD.

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### A HINT TO COAL OPERATORS.

There are some who think that all the trouble at Springhill is due to the fact that the General Manager is not an expert in coal mining, that is that he never had any practical experience underground. In order to succeed in any great undertaking it is not necessary that the one at the head of affairs have extensive practical knowledge of the particular business. His chief requirement is horse sense, and judgement sufficient to pick out capable subordinates. For the development of the steel industry in Sydney great credit is given to President Plummer. Plummer never worked in a rod or rolling mill. Pres. Ross is doing well as the head of the big Coal Co'y, and yet he never mined a fall in a pit. Thos. Cantley who manages the coal as well as the steel end of his company's business, never drew a pillar in any mine, and yet no word of censure is ever heard as to faulty methods at the works they represent. The first requisite of a director or a general manager of a company is to select, as already stated, capable subordinates. Mr. Duggan, the present general manager of the Dominion Coal Co., is a pronounced success; Hiram Donkin, a former general manager, did splendid work, and yet neither had mining engineers' affixes.

A writer in the Eastern Chronicle, who is dealt very gently with by the editor, asserts that all the troubles at Springhill are due to Mr. Cowans, 'who never worked a day in the mine in his life.' As we have shown, practical knowledge in mining coal is not essential to a capable general manager. The correspondent advances several reasons why

there is trouble at Springhill. At this time we will deal with one only which the correspondent says is the greatest, or chief one. The mine is not worked scientifically, he says.

"4th. and greatest.—In opening up a mine the first thing is to sink a slope down in the coal to a reasonable depth, and from the slope drive levels. If the coal is to be practically mined, the work of extracting the coal between the extreme end of the level and the slope, should begin at the innermost end of the level, which has been driven to the desired length. But in these mines as soon as they drive the level beyond a reasonable distance to allow coal enough to support the slope, they get hungry for dividends, and pull the loaf out half cooked, by compelling the management to cut this solid block of coal up with roads ten feet wide, every 50 feet, in order to get out more coal at the particular time. By the time the level is driven to its limit the whole of the block of coal is weakened, and all the timber used up and naturally the roof stone has fallen, and when they get to the end of the level and start back towards the slope extracting all the coal, they find it requires the best and skilled miners to cross these old workings, and in doing so they have to do a tremendous lot of timbering, as well as removing and storing stone. All this extra cost of timber and timbering, for the company pays to have this work done, which brings no return for the money spent, is charged up against producing greater than it was before, and greater than it would be to-day if properly operated."

Theoretically free trade, to many of us, seems unassailable; to most of us it appears impossible, practically. This Springhill expert's plan of operating a coal mine is unassailable from the stand point of the theorist; it is wholly out of question as a practical proposition. The mines of Nova Scotia, as a whole, are fairly well managed. Men familiar with coal mining as conducted in Britain and in the United States, as well as native born, have had supervision of the opening up and development of collieries, and yet in no single instance, so far as our knowledge goes, has the plan as we understand it, suggested by the E. C's correspondent been attempted, not to say adopted. The management of any ordinary joint stock company would place his position in jeopardy if he did so. The stockholders would fly at the directors, and these at the manager. To sink a slope to a 'reasonable' depth on a pitching seam, and install the necessary plant would occupy say eighteen months. To run levels to the extreme end, presumably of the boundary, might mean a drive of a mile or more. Driven at the rate of nine feet a day, and allowing 290 working days in the year, would mean two years more. That makes three and a half years. Long wall retreating was probably in the mind of the E. C's correspondent. Before an open cut could be made to enable thirty men to be placed at work other six men would be spoiled. After four years; outputs would begin, and what outputs for these days. Say two hundred tons each out of the levels east and west, and a hundred tons from additional slope and level driving. The questions that might be asked of the advocates of such a system are:— "Where is all the money to come from; How is a decent output to be secured and; Where would working faces be found for miners."

We have been told, in the press, that the seams at Springhill are variable in height. A seam may