

LARGER OPERATIONS NECESSARY.

We have felt that the coal trade could not be carried on successfully in a small way. It is useless to expect an article of a cheap character like coal to be handled successfully, unless by the combination of much capital and skill. I do not want to be understood as undervaluing the operations of the gentlemen who have been interested in coal mining in Nova Scotia, but my belief is that they have been carrying on their work on a much smaller scale than similar operations have been carried on in the neighboring republic. Now, what I say is, that if we expect to compete with the Americans we must adopt modern methods and meet our competitors on even terms. Therefore it seemed to us desirable, in approaching this question, that, in order to meet American competition, we should adopt American ideas and methods in regard to the mining, shipment and handling of coal. Even though the present tariff conditions should continue we felt there was great need of improvement and reform in regard to the methods at present employed in these particulars.

THE CANADIAN COAL DUTY.

As respects the effect of the Canadian coal duty, that is a political question, and I will only mention it in passing. There are those who say that the duty imposed on American coal was of no advantage to the Province of Nova Scotia. I have never taken that view. I have always held that the protective system as a whole is a bad one, and that any advantage which we have derived from the coal duties has been more than counterbalanced by the evils of the system. But, while admitting that our coal trade up the St. Lawrence River has been increased by the duties, there is an important fact to which attention should be called. While it is a fact that our coal trade has increased, it has not increased as rapidly as the general consumption of coal. Leaving out of the question the product of British Columbia, if we take the total imports of coal into the Dominion, and the output of the Nova Scotia mines for the year ending June 30, 1878, we find that 894,798 tons were imported, and the total sales of Nova Scotia during the same year were 732,588 tons. Of this total amount of coal consumed in the Dominion 55 per cent. was imported, and Nova Scotia contributed 45 per cent. Yet in 1891 we find that while there had been a large increase in the production of coal, we had proportionately lost ground. While the