

Wales coal trade to arrive at any agreement at their recent meeting adds to the gravity of the situation so far as the general coal trade of the country is concerned. It was well known that the rank and file of the miners in South Wales had laid it down that no agreement was to be finally ratified by the men's representatives until it had first been submitted to and approved by the men. But it was hoped that the parties might come sufficiently near to each other at their last meeting to justify some new agreement being put before the men. It is evident that a deadlock has now been reached, and that the men's side of the Board has little hope of a peaceful settlement. As a proof that this is so the workmen employed at the non-associated collieries in South Wales have been instructed to lodge notices, so that the men may be in a position to make joint action with the general body at the end of March should a general stoppage become necessary. The danger of a serious outbreak is not by any means confined to South Wales, as a general conference of delegates representative of the whole British coal fields is likely to be called to consider the position, and if this meeting is held, the question will again be raised of taking a ballot of the whole of the miners of the country on the question of a general stoppage. In the present temper of the men in the two northern counties the probability is that the Welshmen would have the sympathy of the representatives of Durham and Northumberland in getting a general ballot taken, as the double shifting system is the chief bone of contention between the coalmasters and miners in South Wales."

## ***- Rubs by Rambler.***

"If the President (Plummer) preserves the determination he has heretofore avowed we may look for another strike at Sydney. Suppose an upheaval occurs at the mines, and at Sydney, over non-recognition, and suppose the Company wins, other companies operating in Inverness, Pictou, and Cumberland will force a fight, the same will likely be done by operators of smaller industries in Halifax and other places, and trade unionism in Nova Scotia may be crushed. I need not say to you, with the idea of informing you, Mr. Premier, that the crushing, if it comes, will be an awfully expensive process."

These are the words of Dr. Kendall. Who would have imagined that the genial doctor could be such a prophet of evil omen; who would have imagined he could be so sentimental? All this fuss over recognition is the thinnest kind of vapour. Recognition, for most practical purposes, is neither here nor there. It is demanded in many cases solely through pride of heart. Of all the big strikes that have occurred how many have sprung from non-recognition. The Lingan strike in 1882 did not originate over any question of recognition. The Secretary of the General Mining Association received not only a committee of the P. W. A., but a Grand Officer also who was not a workman. Recognition in that case did not prevent a strike. The refusal of the Sec'y. of the G. M. A. to comply with the request, for an increase

in rates, led to a strike that lasted twelve months. The one strike in Pictou in a score and a half of years, was not over recognition which had been conceded to long previously; of the numerous strikes in Springhill, up till the present one, not a single one was over the question of recognition. The great tram and railway strikes witnessed within recent years, and the strikes threatened, were not and are not at all over the question of recognition, but of that of increased rates. If a body of workmen are united, of one mind, they need not care a fig, not a snap of the finger, for it. If it is granted that non-recognition is a grievance, then it may be said it is made up of one part utility and three parts sentiment.

Dr. Kendall asks the Premier to introduce a measure prohibiting the employers from discriminating against their employees for having joined any organization. The Premier might as well introduce an act prohibiting any person from harboring evil thoughts. It would be as easy in the one case to secure evidence as in the other. Discrimination may be made to assume a thousand and one forms.

Here is Dr. Kendall's cure for the evils of non-recognition:—

"Further, viewing the future with an eye on the past it is expedient and right that corporations operating under charter of the Legislature be compelled to recognize trade unions of men in their employ, and in case of division among workmen that the Government have power to compel recognition of one or other of the divisions as may be deemed in the public interest."

That verily is a patent medicine cure—a nostrum of no value. Let us suppose such a law had been in existence last July and the government had said to the employers, "You have to recognize the U. M. W." Would that have prevented a strike at Glace Bay? Not at all likely, if the recognition of the U. M. W. meant the non-recognition of the P. W. A. If there are two opposing unions and the government tells the employers which to recognize, will the neglected union take it quietly and suck their thumbs? Not likely. There would surely be another labor war. Why did the doctor stop short? Why had he not the courage, the fairness, to add "and whichever union the government names, the opposing unionists must join in. That is the naturally corollary of government interference in the matter of opposing unions. The idea to our mind is preposterous."

"The President of the Dominion Coal Company, at present recognizes the Provincial Workmen's Association by reason of a contract with that body to which he lately became heir. But this contract will expire within two years and upon the expiry of which the President, if then occupying his present position as president, is expected to refuse to deal with the Provincial Workmen's Association as an organized body. This expectation of the coal president's attitude is based on the fact that in 1903 when the trouble at the Sydney Steel plant was brewing he refused to recognize the Provincial Workmen's Association as an organization, and expressed his determination not to do so if he remained in Cape Breton."

The foregoing is from Dr. Kendall's speech on