

# THE CANADIAN MINING JOURNAL

VOL. XXX.

TORONTO, March 1, 1909

No. 5

## The Canadian Mining Journal

With which is incorporated the  
"CANADIAN MINING REVIEW"

Devoted to Mining, Metallurgy and Allied Industries in Canada

Published fortnightly by the

**MINES PUBLISHING CO., LIMITED**

*Head Office* - - Confederation Life Building, Toronto.

*Branch Offices* Montreal, Halifax, Victoria, and London, Eng.

*Editor:*

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**SUBSCRIPTIONS**—Payable in advance, \$2.00 a year of 24 numbers, including postage in Canada. In all other countries, including postage, \$3.00 a year.

Advertising copy should reach the Toronto Office by the 8th, for the issues of the 15th of each month, and by the 23rd for the issues of the first of the following month. If proof is required, the copy should be sent so that the accepted proof will reach the Toronto Office by the above dates.

### CIRCULATION.

During the year ending with March 1st, 1908, 91,750 copies of "The Canadian Mining Journal" were printed and distributed, an average of 3,822 per issue.

"Entered as second-class matter April 23rd, 1908, at the post-office at Buffalo, N.Y., under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879."

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### THE AMERICAN COAL INVASION.

The coal mine operators of Nova Scotia are facing a serious situation. The St. Lawrence market upon which the prosperity of the Province's collieries depends, is being systematically invaded by American coal producers.

The collieries of Nova Scotia furnish employment, directly and indirectly, to twenty-one thousand men. Last year (1908) the total production of coal exceeded six millions tons. Total shipments amounted to about five and one-quarter millions. Of this amount a large proportion, roughly two million tons, was shipped up the St. Lawrence to Quebec, Montreal, and intermediate points.

Against United States coal there is a Canadian duty of fifty-three cents per net ton. This, apparently, is insufficient to prevent the dumping of large quantities of American fuels into Eastern Canada. Neither does the advantageous position of Nova Scotian collieries, which are either on or within easy distance of tide-water, suffice to offset the cheaper cost of production in the United States. The collieries of the latter country have a domestic market that is fully developed. They can, therefore, afford to exploit Eastern Canada. They are in a position to make temporary sacrifices that would swamp Canadian competition. Even now their efforts are causing serious embarrassment.

The situation thus created requires immediate attention. Hasty restrictive legislation is not to be recommended. But there is unmistakable need of action on the part of the Dominion and Provincial governments.

As pointed out by Mr. A. S. Barnstead, in our issue of February 1st, 1909, something can be done in the direction of lowering the cost of living in Nova Scotia. The Province is sadly in need of an agricultural population. Mr. Barnstead affirms that not five per cent. of the necessaries of life is produced in the neighborhood of the mines, and this in spite of the fact that many of the collieries are surrounded by good farming and arable lands.

At a conference between the Government of Nova Scotia and the coal men of the Province, held on January 14th, the Government's representation promised that official aid would be given in any proper direction. It was pointed out, however, that the direction indicated above, namely, the reduction of the cost of living by means of the rehabilitation of the agricultural industry, was thought to be most desirable.

Without doubt a movement of this kind would help matters considerably. But concerted action on the part of Nova Scotian operators is the first requirement. If danger threatens all alike, then the time has