

taken a secondary place.

And our own Mr. McGrath has made a similar mistake. He fixed the first price, seemingly regardless of the effect the price set might have on production. Had the setting of a price a little over four dollars a ton the effect of diminishing production? Undoubtedly. Some operators were careless whether they produced any coal at the set price. In fact they said they would sooner allow the coal to remain in the mine than blast, or cut, it at the price. Why should the Canadian Fuel Controller fix a price much less than what the C. P. R., for instance, was ready to pay? That railway has bought more coal than Mr. McGrath may ever have the privilege of controlling, and its management, it may be taken for granted, never paid a higher price than absolutely necessary. Why then was the price set by the Fuel Controller less than the C. P. R. is ready and willing to pay? Is Mr. McGrath aware that the Canadian Government Railway will have to pay about a dollar a ton more for a portion of its coal than the price allowed the coal operators? Coal sold under contract to the C. P. R. has been commandeered, or confiscated, by the Canadian Government Railway. It has been decided in the United States that coal diverted to government purposes, when in transit to those who had contracted for it, must pay the contract price. It should follow then in Canada that coal shipped for the C. P. R. and seized by the C. G. R. must pay the original contract price. Had

ment that a fair price should be given to the operators, in fact as high a price as other customers were ready to pay, the operators would surely have striven after an increased production. The unprofitable price retarded production; a reasonable and paying price would have stimulated it. McGrath should form new associations. The scriptural saying is, "If the blind lead the blind both fall into the ditch." He took with him on his last visit to Nova Scotia the well advertised Jimmy Watters, the upshot being a promise from Jimmie's friends that the output will be increased 60,000 tons or over monthly. Mr. McGrath had better not bank too much on that.

From this time forth Mr. McGrath's position will be a comparatively easy one, at least that part of it which has to do with the controlling of Nova Scotia coal. With the assistance of the celebrated James Watters he has secured from the offices of the Amalgamated Mine Workers of N. S. an assurance that they will increase the output fifteen thousand, or more, tons a week or, say, 60,000 tons a month. This feat is to be accomplished immediately. This additional increase will render any further anxiety on Mr. McGrath's part unnecessary and, of course, there being no work for him to do in the east he will be able to devote all his energies to keeping things up to the mark in the west, and on the border line. This increased production is to be brought about by the A. M. W. procuring a thousand men in the Ancient Colony. There is the possibility that the men may not be obtainable. Even so, the 60,000 tons a month may not be lost. The A. M. W. has another card up its sleeve. It will allow the Government to import Chinese, provided the society is given control of the mines and secures all of the profit, and has the privilege and power to deport the Chinamen at any and all times, at discretion, and without any

interference by the Government, except the shelling out of return prepaid passages. The scheme is a very modest one, and will commend itself to every man who has a bee in his bonnet. With the Chinese as serfs, under the drivership of the A. M. W. executive, coal production in Nova Scotia will be placed in so strong a position that the occupation of the Fuel Controller, so far as it at present concerns Nova Scotia, will be gone. The success of either of the schemes places the position of others than the Fuel Controller in jeopardy. Confusion will show on the face of all who have predicted that there may be a decrease in Nova Scotia output this year of 400,000 tons. Instead of that, if both schemes do not miscarry, nineteen-eighteen will show a handsome increase—say 300,000—over the production of nineteen-seventeen, its immediate predecessor. The Record meantime is content to "bide a wee."

### COAL FROM BURNING MINES.

The Commission appointed, many years ago, by the Local Government to inquire into the mine fires in Pictou County was not originally asked for, as many suppose, for the purpose of ascertaining the cause of their long continuance, or of devising some schemes to extinguish them, but for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not it was possible to recover of the mines which had escaped fire. Many contended that there was sufficient pillar coal to warrant attempts to recover it. (The evidence given by old miners who had worked in several of the closed mines, was contradictory, and the plans were held not to be reliable. The Commission's finding was not stimulating. It should not be forgotten, however, that what could not be an economic proposition a score or more years ago may be a sound one to-day. This seems to be borne out by the fact that coal is now being taken out of a mine in the United States which has been burning for nearly three score years. Here is a clipping from the Coal Trade Journal bearing on this point:

"The Lehigh Coal & Navigation Co. has been taking a considerable quantity of coal for months past from the seams laying beyond the barrier wall by which the great fire at Summit Hill (dating from 1859) has been confined. Great as was the work involved in the building of the wall considerably in advance of the corner area of the fire, vast as was the amount of material put into it, the heat penetrated the wall and took a certain amount of volatile matter from the coal immediately adjacent thereto. But the coal beyond is mostly of the celebrated Mammoth vein and is recovered by the stripping process, thus permitting open-air inspection and the shipping of a first class article. By excavating a great portion of the coal bed, as has been done, the question of the fire spreading has been settled for ever, since there has been created a great intervening space containing no fuel.

"The first steps taken in the successful attempt to check the fire at the burning mine near Summit Hill were in the spring of 1909, and in the issue of May 12th that year, the Journal contained a detailed, illustrated article with reference to the work then