

MARITIME MINING RECORD.

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OUR OIL SHALES—AND OTHER.

One looking for information as to the extent and quality of the oil shales of the provinces of N. B. and N. S., might find a difficulty in being guided to a source of information. Refer him to the Mines Department at Ottawa, and he may be told to get a copy of Dr. Ellis' report, if he can, from outside sources, as there are no spare copies left in Ottawa. If he be referred to the Mines Department in Halifax, he may be answered after this fashion: "Shale, shale, let me think. Oh, yes, shale, the Department spent nearly forty dollars in securing samples of Nova Scotia shale, and we applied a match to it and it smelled of oil." "Has it been analysed?" "Analysed, what is that?" "Can you tell the yield of oil per ton or the pounds of sulphate of ammonia?" "Well, scarcely. That would involve some expenditure and it has ever been the policy of all governments in the province to waste neither time nor money in the exploitation of the baser metals, or minerals, or in fact anything not likely to bring political grist to their mills. Exploitation of our minerals is left entirely to private individuals," and, then, seeing the disappointed look on the enquirer's face he may add: "The Mining Record has had a lot to say of shales, possibly you might get a little information from that source."

The Departments of Mines in Ottawa and in Halifax are fearfully and wonderfully made. There is no necessity to stay their hands from working or ask, "What doest thou?" For the simple reason that working and doing are two qualities wholly foreign to their constitution. The Ottawa Mines Department sent the ever welcome Mr. Faribault down on a certain mission to Nova Scotia and shrugging its shoulders, gave him permission to examine a two foot seam of shale in C. B. Mr. F. was told there was "two" feet of shale in the shaft but he didn't see it. He saw some loose shale at the shaft head. The Mines Department sent Dr. Wright also to Nova Scotia. The Dr. admitted he came as a learner, took a sample or two of weathered shale and sent it to Ottawa to be inspected by the heads there, who can only give it a laboratory test, a thing that any prospector can obtain for himself. Let the Department at Ottawa determine to spend a little money in N. S. in practical work, that is, in getting shale not exposed to the weather and testing it by

other methods than laboratory. The Department at Ottawa having no pecuniary interest in shale development may be excused for begging itself on the province's behalf, but it is different with the Provincial Department of Mines. Really, the Department of Mines at Halifax should awake from its slumbers. The development of our oil shales is of so great importance that we shall again refer to the debate which took place in the Senate a month or more ago, when Senator Donville spoke on his resolution requiring the Government to relieve all oil shale machinery, necessary to be imported, of payment of duty. In the following extract too much "stock" must not be taken of Senator Donville's opinion that "death and misery" may follow if our fuel supplies are not more earnestly looked into:—

Eastern Canada relies for its supply of fuel upon Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and the States. The shipments to the province of Quebec from Nova Scotia are away behind the normal pre-war standard. The production in the States is also much less than normal and this lessened production is being called upon to supply countries hitherto supplied from Britain. Is it not evident that Eastern Canada is bound to suffer from the shortage of fuel which neither supplies of peat nor wood can prevent, indeed can hardly ameliorate? Death is the certain consequence following such conditions. The only source of fuel, the development of which could have supplemented the fuel supply of Eastern Canada, was the oil yielding shales of the Maritime Provinces. Yet for reasons, best known to themselves, but which they have not thought wise to make public, the government has persisted in making it impossible to secure this development. Who then will be morally responsible for the deaths and misery? Surely each member of the Privy Council that created the "impasse."

Even when the British Government sent out to Canada Sir Francis Hopwood, one of the Lords of the Admiralty, to investigate the very question of oil fuels, the Government never notified the known owners of the proven properties, nor their technical advisers, but kept the honourable Lord of the Admiralty strictly secluded within a little coterie of their own officials, who, indeed, knew next to nothing of the actual situation.

I have intentionally avoided speaking upon the question of the possible recovery from the shale, after the oil has been educed therefrom, of certain by-products. I believe, however, that the interests of Canada require that this Chamber and all Canada should be made aware that oil is not the only product that may be economically recovered from certain of the Canadian oil yielding shales. Not perhaps from all, but certainly from some. It is now known that from certain of the shales, there can be recovered nitrogen and potash, both important fertilizer chemicals. Everyone interested in agriculture knows that up to now Canada has been dependent upon foreign sources for her supply of potash. In other, but rarer cases, precious and rare metals in remunerative quantities, may be recovered, and there is a possibility that in certain cases, it may be possible to use the residue for the manufacture of certain qualities of cement. All these sever-