

AROUND THE COLLIERIES.

The water in the Thorburn mine is now up to near No. 4 landing. It is said it cannot rise much further before it reaches the steam pump.

In last issue the Record hinted that certain parties had designs on a portion of the Port Hood areas. Possibly in this we were mistaken, as the Record has been informed that Messrs. Duncan Beaton and others have taken up ground, back of the Port Hood leases, in the direction of Little Mabou. From all we can learn the lessees are satisfied that there is coal on their lease and that they will develop it, beginning in an unpretentious way. The Record wishes them success.

It is rumored that the Thorburn Royal Commission may have another sitting before making a report. It seems that due to the fact that the official stenographer was not versed in mining technical terms errors, of evidence taken, crept in which could be construed in an entirely different sense from what the witnesses intended. From the evidence as published in the Evening News it would appear as if the Commission would have its deliberations largely confined to one point, namely: "Would it pay to reopen the abandoned mine for the comparatively small quantity of coal procurable?"

A member of the local legislature suggests that the closing of some collieries is due to the fact that a company is given many areas all in one lease instead of a separate lease for each area. What does that mean? It simply means that if this legislator's plans had been in existence during the past thirty years Nova Scotia's coal trade would be no larger than in the days of its infancy. There would not be five companies with an output between them of six million tons but a score of collieries, possibly, whose combined output would not reach a million tons. Let it be made law and published broadcast that no company in future would be given more than one square mile in a lease, and that any mile held and not worked would be forfeitable. After the publication of this new edict none but a brainless wastrel could be found who would invest a dollar in Nova Scotian coal areas.

The vacant ground in the Pietou coal field lying in an easterly or southeasterly direction from New Glasgow and lying between that town and Sutherland's River is now almost if now wholly covered by leases. The latest ground to be taken up lies between the Aeadia Coal Co.'s areas and areas held by others, and Sutherland's River. The newest lessee is C. J. Burchell, who has taken first and second rights on two five square mile blocks. It has been reported for some time that there are coal seams in that locality. If the lessee means business then the workmen at Thorburn who are owners of houses, may have opportunity to work nearer home than they have at present. The late new discoveries at Stellarton may tend to a more extended exploration of the Pietou coal fields.

Besides the contribution to the Relief Societies of three-tenths of a cent per ton on coal shipped the local government contributed \$6,250 to what is termed the "Widows' and Orphans' fund." One hundred and twenty-five donations were made, distributed as follows: Sydney Mines district, 28; Glace Bay district, 60; Cumberland district, 21; Pietou district, 14, and Inverness district, 2. It may be interesting to note that for every \$50,000 grant made, the Dominion Coal Company makes the most favorable showing with shipments of 709,000 tons. Pietou comes next with 329,000 tons, then follows Cumberland with 270,000 tons, Sydney Mines with 208,000 tons and Inverness with 110,000 tons, all rough figures. Possibly the Sydney Mines district had more old employees on the roll than any of the other companies. One might have looked for a similar thing in Pietou County, but it must be that in this county the elderly workmen retire at an earlier age than at Sydney Mines and therefore drop from the fund.

For the fiscal year ending 30th Sept., 1915, the coal mining schools cost the Local Government \$9,863.95, divided among the several districts as follows:

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| Cumberland County | \$3,165.46 |
| Glace Bay | 3,109.93 |
| Sydney Mines | 1,493.46 |
| Pietou County | 1,865.14 |
| Inverness County | 229.96 |

Let it be assumed that the coal mining schools include the schools for stationery engineers. To the \$9,863.00 have to be added the sums paid the members of the examining boards and incidental expenses in connection with the schools, examinations, and granting of certificates, some \$2,200 being the total expense in the matter of granting certificates to mine overmen, managers and engineers and up to some \$12,000. At the last examinations eighty certificates were granted, 39 to coal mining officials and 41 to engineers. Dividing the expenses by 80 it is found that each successful candidate cost the province a hundred and fifty dollars. Last year there were five districts in which examinations were held. From the several districts the proportion of successful candidates for certificates was as follows:

Glace Bay—Mine officials, 22; engineers, 19; total, 41.

Sydney Mines—Mine officials, 5; engineers, 6; total, 11.

Pietou County—Mine officials, 6; engineers, 8; total, 14.

Cumberland County—Mine officials, 6; engineers 1; total, 7.

Inverness County—Engineers, 7; total, 7.

There is an astounding difference, in the cost to the government, for each successful candidate. In Cumberland County the cost was \$452.00, an astonishingly high figure; in Sydney Mines, \$136.00; in Pietou County, \$133.00; in Glace Bay, \$76.00, and in Inverness County, \$33.00 only. It will be