

## *- Rubs by Rambler.*

A common idea these days is that a few individuals only benefit very largely from the labors of the workmen. We are told that the workman participates only to a small extent in the fruits of his labors and that the major portion goes into the pockets of large capitalists. I am not going to attempt to prove that the workman gets his fair share of profits; in some cases he may not. My intention is to point out the mistake committed when workmen think that their immediate employers, those at the head of the concerns for which they work, are those who gain by keeping down expenses, or those who lose when wages, general expenses of production are increased. These are the days of big corporations, and big corporations are not composed of a few but of many individuals. I heard the remark lately: "Oh if the company is not making profit through cost of production being increased and increase in wages etc., they are able to live without profit; they have other sources of income." Some of them may have other sources of income but that is no reason why they should not look for interest on the money invested in a particular concern. And then it may be that many have no other source of income than that derived from dividends on their investments. Two thousand men coming out on strike for increase of wages may think that the granting of the increase only concerns a few, while it really affects as large a number as that on strike. How many holders are there of Dominion Steel, and how many of them are relatively poor men or poor widows. Are there not more shareholders, than there are employees of the company. How many people take thought to the number of persons affected when a company fails to pay a proper dividend, or who are made happy when a dividend is paid. The Pennsylvania Railroad is a big concern and a prevalent belief is that it is controlled by a few very rich individuals. It may be true that there are a few heavy shareholders, but there is also a host of smaller ones. From a compilation just completed it is found that there are no fewer than 50,000 shareholders in the concern. And further it is shown that 46 per cent. or over 23,000 are women, many of these no doubt widows. These figures go to show that the net earnings of a company do not affect only a few supposed heads, but have a bearing, in some cases a most important bearing, on the lives of very many people scattered over the whole country.

The cheerful man at a time like this is in value above rubies. We are being told that there is to be a heavy decline in iron and steel production, and as the iron trade is a sure barometer it follows that there is to be a general decline in all businesses. It is I believe true that orders in the steel trade are at present falling off, but there are those who think the decline will only be temporary. The 'Manufacturers Record' is decidedly cheerful and says:—

"As soon as this temporary agitation—for temporary agitation it must be—has been succeeded by the sober, common sense of the people there will come a new period of railroad construction, and to the business activity which we are now enjoying will be added a vast expansion of railroad interests. No one imagines that American development is going to be halted; no one imagines that the magnificent progress which this country has so long been making is to be checked, and so while the pessimist here and there may be in the ascendency at the moment, his day must of necessity, by virtue of the solid foundation on which American prosperity is building, be short-lived. The next advance movement will exceed that of late years as much as that has exceeded the activities of 10 or 20 years ago. Then men—great, broad men, equal to the responsibility of this new order of things—will be more difficult to find than capital."

Whatever may befall the iron industry within the next twelve months, it looks, at the present, as if for the next year and a half the coal trade of Nova Scotia will pass through a time of great prosperity.

The New Zealand Miners' Union cannot be an unqualified success. It seems to me that it now stands where the P. W. A. stood in the first two years of existence. There was a time in Nova Scotia when the P. W. A. sought to restrict its members to a certain output per day. The object in this was to take from the employers an excuse for reductions on account of the big pays drawn. At that time it is possible the policy had some thing to commend it. It may have been that employers had not cut their wisdom teeth and instead of glorying in big outputs even if involving big wages—comparatively—took advantage of these to attempt a cut in rates. But these days have passed from us. The miner may make as big pay as he can without fear that a reduction in rates will follow, and the lodges of the P. W. A. do not ask their members to restrict themselves to a limited darg. They do not ask that the energies of their members be cribbed or confined. The stigma that unions drag down the good workers to a level with the poor ones does not apply in the P. W. A. And in this respect it seems to me that our unions are far more sensible much in advance of the unions in New Zealand. In amendments to the Coal Mines Act lately introduced in the New Zealand Legislature, the union officials ask that the employers be compelled to provide the union officials with a copy of the pay sheet of each man in the employ. This is certainly an astounding request. It is a terrible reflection on the union rank and file. It is equivalent to saying 'Our members are insubordinate or liars, they will either not give us the amounts drawn, or give false accounts'. The object of this peculiar request is no doubt so that the officials may be able to command the capable workman to 'cease canny' to bring himself down to the level of the incapable. If New Zealand is the workingman's paradise then it is a paradise where suspicion, envy, and suspicion is not conducive to peace and good will. With all its labor laws New Zealand seems to be a long way in the rear. The laws