

## MARITIME MINING RECORD.

The MARITIME MINING RECORD is published the second and fourth Wednesday in each month.

The RECORD is devoted to the Mining—particularly Coal Mining—Industries of the Maritime Provinces.

Advertising rates, which are moderate may be had on application.  
Subscription \$1.00 a year. Single Copies 5 cents

## R. DRUMMOND, PUBLISHER.

ST. LARTON N. S.

Sept 13 1911

\*\*\*\*\*

## RABIDLY GRITTY.

Replying to a short criticism in our issue of 25th. ult. the Glace Bay Gazette says:

"It is a fact that the coal duty has, as the Mining Record points out, been gradually reduced from 75 cents a ton to the 45 cents now prospective. Notwithstanding this, it is also a fact that the wages of mine workers have been steadily advanced. Why then should the Mining Record and its fellow scare-mongers among the Tories undertake to say in effect that this 8-cent reduction of the duty is the last straw and that reduction of wages will follow? It is simply a case of trying to create a scare that is not warranted by experience. When the duty was reduced by seven cents the self-same cry was set up by the Tories to make political capital. Fourteen years experience has shown that they were talking nonsense. Fourteen years after this the Mining Record will, we are confident, see that there was no ground for the present effort to create alarm among the miners. The 7 cent reduction then was the last straw; now the last straw is being piled on again. It gets rather monotonous after a while, but like predictions of the end of the world there is a limit after which prophets of disaster only become objects of ridicule.

"As we have already pointed out, it is a pure assumption to claim that the coal companies, under a 45 cent duty in future, will make less money than they have under a 53 cent duty in the past 14 years. Are they not constantly adopting economical and labor saving methods and appliances? After a certain point does not increased output mean a lessened cost per ton and therefore a greater margin of profit? Who will undertake to prove that the companies are going to make less money per ton?"

To which we reply: It is quite true that wages have gone up since 1890, not since 1896 as the Gazette claims, and it was right that rates should have been increased, but at what cost has the wages gone up and been maintained. If wages have 'steadily' advanced, the price of coal since 1900 or 1901 has been stationary. How then did the companies manage to advance wages? By economies in management and by withholding fair dividends to their shareholders.

The MINING RECORD did not say that this eight cent reduction was the last straw—presumably to break the back of the coal trade, nor did we say that as a result of the agreement being ratified, mine employees would suffer a reduction of wages, and in suggesting that we did both, the Gazette betrays a lack of material for good argument.

The Gazette is presumptuous and affects a know-

ledge of the coal trade beyond that of those engaged in the business, for 98 per cent. of the coal operators of the province, in a memorial sent to Mr. Fielding toward the close of 1910, declared that ANY REDUCTION in the coal duty would 'disastrously' affect the coal trade, and that is a stronger adverb than the RECORD has used.

When the Gazette, inflated by pride of argument, says contemptuously, "it is pure assumption to claim that the coal companies under a 45 cent duty in future will make less money than under a 53 cent duty for the last 14 years", one is at a loss whether to be sorry, or annoyed or mirthful, sorry for its blindness, annoyed at its perversity, or mirthful at its revelation of, in its case, the school master being abroad. A majority of the companies during recent years made no money, and quite a few of them went into bankruptcy. The Gazette, no matter how keen it may be as a partizan, is the last paper that should make the assertion, even by implication, that there has been money in the trade of late years, for it is asserted that one largely interested in the Gazette was largely instrumental in promoting a coal company which has lost to its bondholders thousands upon thousands of dollars.

The last sentence in the extract from the Gazette is a dazzler. "Who will undertake to 'prove' that the companies are going to make less money per ton". If lack of ability to 'prove' is a reason why the reduction in the coal duty should not be opposed, then surely the inability to prove that the agreement as a whole will make Canada more prosperous than it is, is a sufficient reason why the agreement should be opposed. The old saw has it "The proof of the pudding is the eating of it." If that be so how is it possible to furnish 'proof' as to its quality before even it has been put in the pot. Party over-zeal is responsible, we fear, for a mental apoplexy which divests the patient of all ability to reason.

## BOUNTIES AND BILLETS.

Very many people run away with the idea that notwithstanding the removal of the bounties on iron and steel, the industry is still highly protected and should be able to hold its own against all comers. We will at this time make no reference to the bounty on pig iron as possibly as much could be said on one side as the other. Our intention at this time is merely to demonstrate that the people who are possessed with the idea that the steel makers are highly protected, are hugely mistaken. And here, though we may have occasion to say it again, some protection to steel products is necessary for the reason that it costs in Nova Scotia about 25 per cent. more in labor alone to produce the iron and the steel that it does in Britain, Nova Scotia's chief competitor. If the Nova Scotia steel and iron makers could secure labor at the same cost as in Britain they might be in a position to be independent of all government favors to the industry. That the steel industry secures its due proportion of protection, so long as protection is in vogue, is imperative to the success of the industry.

The duties on iron and steel products instead of being fabulous are insignificant and paltry. Take for instance the selling price of billets in Britain at \$22.00 per ton, and the preference duty here at