

of a Government agent, the applicant is allowed, in addition to the regular 30 days, one day for each 10 miles, or fraction thereof, in excess of 100 miles. This will meet with warm approval.

One other paragraph calls for comment. Paragraph 13 provides that bona fide settlers shall be entitled to buy at the pit's mouth whatever coal they may require, but not for barter or sale, at a price not to exceed \$1.75 per ton. Whilst the intention here is commendable, the wording is too vague. As the law does not specify the grade of coal to be supplied to settlers, the operator is permitted to palm off any kind of slack or culm. Moreover, fixing a definite price per ton is dangerous. Operating expenses are constantly increasing. The cost of coal at the pit's mouth may before long exceed \$1.75. We would suggest that as all Dominion agents have free access to the books and accounts of coal mining companies, some effort be made to leave the adjusting of prices in their hands. In fairness to the operators it would be necessary to provide means of appeal and arbitration. It would also be essential to fix the price, not for an indefinite time, but for certain stated periods. We believe, however, that paternalism of this kind, it matters not how laudable the intention, is superfluous. The laws of supply and demand, and the rigours of competition, are the final adjusters of values. To set a fair price cumbersome machinery must be created and kept in motion. To fix an arbitrary price is unjust. Why, then, touch the matter at all!

Incidentally, we would like to have some light thrown upon the question as to what does or does not constitute a bona fide settler. We shall not be surprised if some difficulty is encountered in framing a satisfactory definition.

INDUSTRIAL FEDERATION.

The recently elected President of the Iron and Steel Institute in his opening address departed from precedent. Instead of touching upon matters scientific and technical, he reviewed the social and economic conditions that have obtained in Great Britain since the founding of the Institute, the year 1869.

The president, at the beginning of his paper, points out that while economics have become the recognized basis of politics, yet as the Institute is concerned solely with facts and not with inferences, he had no fear of trespassing upon the political field. His field is, therefore, confined to industrial and social aspects, to the entire exclusion of matters political. But whilst he draws comparisons between the industrial development of Great Britain and that of foreign countries, he makes no such comparison of social conditions, confining himself merely to marking the contrast in Great Britain itself as between the year 1869 and the present day.

On succeeding pages of the address it is shown that, although in the year 1869, Great Britain had an enormous lead over all other nations in the production of iron, steel, and coal, yet this superior position could

not be maintained. "The output of coal, iron, and steel, the foundation of the national industry, cannot, in the nature of things, depend solely on the energy of the workers and the ability of administrators. However rich in natural resources the soil may be, the element of area must always be a great factor in the case." Obvious as is the truth of this statement, it is equally apparent that part at least of Germany's progress is due to something more than mere extent of territory. And that something is what Great Britain has always lacked.

Forty years ago Great Britain was easily first in the production of pig-iron, coal, and steel. Now both the United States and Germany are far ahead of her. Whilst Great Britain's position is still strong, a point has been reached where purely physical conditions indicate the future limits of industrial expansion. Expansion there will be for years yet; but not at anything like the rate that is observable in larger countries. Comparisons with Germany and the United States are unfair. "We can only regain the position of supremacy that we occupied in 1869 by reckoning in with the United Kingdom our great dominions overseas." This, we take it, is a constructive plea for imperial industrial federation.

Touching the amelioration of social conditions in Great Britain since 1869, the broad statement is made that since that year there has been a general advance in money wages and a general decline in the prices of commodities. The wage-earner receives to-day 38 shillings, where, in 1869, he received 20 shillings. To-day, also, the worker is better housed, better fed, better clad, and in all respects has a better chance in life.

The Presidential address makes cheerful reading. The generalizations alluded to above are substantiated by means of statistics.

After reading it carefully, the impression is strong upon us that the British workman has surprisingly little to complain of.

THE LAST MINE MYTH.

Innumerable are the platitudes that have been written concerning the credulity of man. More convincing than all the platitudes are the amazing instances from real life. The latest and best test of blind belief is a project born in Boston.

Mr. J. Burpee Neily, not unknown to the inhabitants of Eastern Canada, is the president of the Viboras Mining Corporation, capital stock, \$3,000,000; par value of shares, \$5. Mr. C. P. Bowker is manager of the Viboras mine, which mine is situate eight miles from Hostotipaquillo, Mexico. But the Viboras is no ordinary mine. True, there is reported to be shipping ore running from \$500 to \$17,000 per ton. This, however, is so insignificant that Mr. Neily suggests counting upon only \$100 per ton. And well can he afford this discount, for, within the mine lie 45 tons of silver and 29 tons of gold, hidden treasure that once belonged to