

## *- Rubs by Rambler.*

In the Herald a few weeks ago, Jas. B. McLaughlin, U. M. W. Secretary, had a letter in the Herald, I think, showing how well off the Nova Scotia operators were, in the prices they received for coal, as compared with the B. C. operators, and how wretchedly poorly paid the Nova Scotia miners were in comparison with those of British Columbia. At the time the RECORD mildly hinted that Mr. McLaughlin did not know very well what he was talking about, and there is now abundant confirmation of that opinion. Mr. McLaughlin appealed to all sorts of authorities. The RECORD is content to rely on official authority alone. First as to the extraordinary profits of the Nova Scotia operators as compared with those of B. C., the Report of the Federal Department of Mines places the price of B. C. coal at \$3.50 per ton, and that of Nova Scotia coal at \$2.25 a ton, in each instance a ton of 2240 is meant. In other words the B. C. operators value their coal more than fifty per cent. higher than the Nova Scotian. If the cost of B. C. coal is \$3.50 per ton how do they manage to continue in business and sell coal f. o. b., as stated by the authority quoted at \$2.12 or \$1.38 less than what it costs them? Of course the average prices in both cases are taken, and the year 1909 instead of some year in the misty past.

And then we are told the miners of Nova Scotia are miserably paid in comparison. Let it be admitted their wages are a little lower, so also is the cost of living, not, however, a little but much lower. But that is not all, nor is it by any means the most important difference. In British Columbia in ten years there were 470 fatal accidents, an average of forty-seven per year. In other words B. C., with fifty per cent. less production has fifty per cent. more fatal coal mining accidents, and that, too, though the vigilant eye of the U. M. W. is fastened on the mines. Yes it may be true that the miners in British Columbia earn a little more wages, but what of the death toll they pay. "What should a man gain in exchange for his soul". That is a question. Taking 1909, in which year there was no big mining disaster in either province, it will be found that in B. C. the fatal accidents were nearly twice as many per thousand men employed as in Nova Scotia. It is not pleasant to be making these comparisons, but they are necessary in order to show that if the U. M. W.'s are in a position to secure higher wages for their members, they are either careless, regardless or powerless in securing things of much greater importance.

The Dartmouth Patriot is, it must be granted, outspoken, and patriotic too, but in its own way. Referring to the threatened reduction in Maritime Provinces representation it says:

"Not until members saw their seats in danger did they bestir. The members of these provinces sitting at Ottawa, have not been worth their salt. The interests of the people have been neglected. They did not look for a remedy when they saw the young men of strength and ability leaving to build up other places. They never turned a hand but let them go unregarded. The reward is now being reaped.

"There is no reason why Quebec province should grow faster than these. This province at least should grow faster than any in old Canada. Rank indifference to our needs is the trouble, no proper railway develop-

ment, no commercial ports being built, the vast and profitable fisheries wilfully and scandalously neglected, the building of ships discouraged until it has become a lost art, and to cap the climax hostile traffic charges, which make it impossible for shippers to get freights on fair terms over the government road, have been applied.

"When members have these things remedied as they easily can if they are insistent then indeed will the premiers not have to go to Ottawa, finger in mouth, asking favors."

There is force in what is said relative to the want of gumption of our members, but is the Patriot so sore on the coal trade, because he has to pay a few cents more on the ton than is paid in Pennsylvania, that he has not a word of encouragement for it, an industry that is bound to be linked with the future of Nova Scotia, if not to be the leading factor in making that history. There are no decreases in population where coal mining is being carried on, and when the next census is taken I will be very much surprised if the only counties in Nova Scotia showing noticeable gains are not the counties where coal mining is prosecuted.

Politicians and papers made remarkable summersaults during the recent British Electoral Campaign. Here is an instance of this and how the Glasgow Herald is nicely reminded of it by a correspondent:—

"Sir,—I find strong commendation expressed in two leading articles in your issue of to-day of the latest device of the Tory party to obstruct the right of the people to assert their will in legislation through their duly elected representatives. I extract two sentences as illustrative of your opinion to-day:—

There is a real democratic principle involved in the demand of the Unionist party that grave questions shall be submitted to the referendum, to the actual test of the electors' vote. . . . Nothing more simple, nothing more essentially democratic could be contrived than that reference to the real "voice of the people" which the Unionist party advocates as the solution of our constitutional difficulties."

No doubt three weeks is a tremendously long period in the political history of these recent days, and you cannot be held to opinions expressed at such a distant date, but you will never perhaps not object to produce the concluding words of your leading article of November 10:—

The Unionist leaders can have no special affection for the referendum. It is a thoroughly democratic device, no doubt; but it does not seem to accord with the spirit of British Parliamentary institutions. It works well in Switzerland because the Swiss Federal Assembly is an Assembly of delegates. Moreover the referendum would cause new complications of which it is difficult to see the end. If a ministry with a fair-sized majority took a referendum on a bill and the result were adverse Ministers would resign. But if the vote were favourable it is quite likely that Ministers would appeal to the country to get a renewal of office. On the whole then, we do not feel any great regret at the Cabinet's refusal to consider the proposal to institute a referendum in special cases."

There is talk these days of the pulpit losing its power. If it is any consolation to the down hearted a similar thing may be said of the press. With three-fourths of the London papers tory, London went largely liberal and with two influential tory papers for every influential liberal paper, Scotland stuck like a burr to the liberal party.