The Eastern Chronicle.

TWICE-A-WEEK

Published on Monday and Thursday evenings of each week.

NEW GLASGOW, N. S.

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NEW GLASGOW, NOVA SCOTIA.

THE GOLDENVILLE TRAGEDY.

We have been favored with a copy of the evidence given at the coroner's inquest into the cause of the death of Simon McEachern and Arthur McQuarrie in the shaft belonging to the Nova Scotia and Mexican Mining Company at Goldenville.

The following is the verdict :—

"That Simon McEachern and Arthur McQuarrie came to their death by stepping on a tub hanging at the mouth of the vertical shaft situated on the property of the Nova Scotia and Mexican Mining Company, the brake slipping from causes unknown to us the deceased were precipitated to the bottom of the shaft on the morning of the 10th Feb., 1904."

The story is very simple. The two young men along with two others were engaged on one shift in sinking the vertical shaft at the N. S. and M. Co's works. Their first job for the shift—(an 8 hour shift) was to send up the rock from the previous blasts. When that was done they got on the tub and came on deck. For the first 15 feet from the bottom of the shaft there were no ladders. In fact, it would be impossible to keep ladders any nearer the bottom of the shaft than the timbering went down. It was them imperative that the men should ride on the tub until at least they reached the ladders. An effort seems to have been persistently made during the inquest to show that it was against certain posted rules to ride on the tub, but it was nonsense making that contention as the foreman saw them ride on the tub, he told the men where to go to work and there was no other way to get to their work but by the tub, nor away from the bottom of the shaft but by the tub. For the life of us we cannot tell what Mr. Stuart was driving at in his cross examination of the witnesses. The management made the men travel by the tub. We may regard that point as settled beyond all controversy.

Now, let it be understood that we have no objection to that plan getting men down into and out of a mine. It is exceedingly difficult to keep ladders down to the bottom of a shaft when sinking that shaft. We have seen chain ladders used in Goldenville, but they were not a success. They could not be secured from being broken with the rock. On the whole, providing the machinery is good, the hoist is the best way to get men to their work when sinking a shaft. When working in levels etc., it is well to make the men take the ladder-way, because, when a large number of them knock off at the same time, there is a rush for the hoist and accidents are imminent. The hoist was used at this mine and, we think properly used, had the arrangements been correct.

As far as we can see by the evidence the hoist is a good one and on the night of the accident in its usual good condition. This is proven by the fact that, without any fixing, the man who usually worked it wound up the slack rope that run out when the tub run down with the men, and hoisted the wounded men out of the mine etc. The hoist was therefore in good condition.

That the men had every confidence in the hoist is shown by the fact that the four men deliberately walked to the tub to get on in order to return to their work. Smith and Murphy were delayed a little, but McEachern first stepped on the tub followed immediately by McQuarrie. The

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tub held McEachern's weight, but as soon as McQuarrie's weight was added the tub started on its race with death for the bottom. Why did it start? Because the brake was not fastened securely There can be no doubt about that. Why? The evidence does not say. The man in charge swore that he believed that he fastened the brake securely. No doubt he thinks he did. An effort was made to show that the brake was tampered with after the attendant set it or thought he set it firmly when he placed the tub at the lower deck after the men came up; but the effort was not successful and we deem the suggestion highly improbable.

Harold Cunningham, who had charge of the hoist and attended to lowering and hoisting the men had a great deal of other work to do in addition. He swears :—

"Am hoistman and look after machinery. I run the hoist, look after air compressor, the pumping engine, the rock breaker, the blue shaft or main shaft—* * * I did not know when they first came up to their lunch. I hoisted them that time. I heard the signal given below, it was 3 bells. I did not see them that half hour. They came up on a tub part of rock and part of water. Three bells is the signal to hoist slow, I can't tell by any indicator apart from the rope itself what position the tub is in the shaft. There is no indicator of that sort. I have a mark that I can stop her at the lower deck when the men get on and off, and at the upper deck when I land the tub, that mark is a marlin on the rope, from where I operate the hoist, I can see the upper deck, I can't see the lower lock. I can see when the marlin passes the upper deck. I depend on seeing the marlin after it is wound on the drum. I can't see where the men step on and off the tub from where I operate the hoist. I did not see these men when they stepped on the tub for the last time, Wednesday morning. I was at the air compressor, oiling her up, that was a part of my duties. The first thing I heard was the men halloaing. I didn't go nowheres only to the hoist. I ran to the hoist, the hoist was running down, I had to pull the friction brake on. The foot-brake was on as far as I know to my knowledge."

Now it seems clear that had the man been at the brake or hoist he would have stopped the tub in an instant. The man had too much to do. In his evidence he swore that on night shift he worked for 13 hours and that he was so busy that he could not tell when he would be able to eat his luncheon. There does not seem to be any doubt but that he is naturally a careful man. At least we would judge so from the evidence; but he had so much to do that he could not do it all carefully. He had to hurry from one job to another through the entire shift. Had he been attending exclusively to the hoist, as he should have been when men were working continuously in 8 hour shifts in the shafts, the accident that caused the death of those two young men would not have occurred.

And too, there does not seem to have been proper precautions taken to apprise the man in charge of the hoist when men were being hoisted and lowered. The men had to travel to the bottom of the shaft on the tub. There seems to have been no code of signals established to let it be known to the man operating the hoist when men were on the tub except a general signal of "go slow," and this applied to everything except rock. So, looking at the unfortunate and deplorable incident in all its lights, it narrows down to this:—that a man should have been at that hoist all the time and he should have been signalled always when men were being hoisted and lowered and particularly signalled before men stepped *on the tub or the deck to go down.*

In this connection we wonder that the jury did not make some recommendations in respect to handling men in shaft sinking. Every one of them is perfect familiar with the whole process; they know its difficulties, dangers and necessities. Why they neglected to recommend to the Company that henceforth in their opinion a man should constantly under similar circumstances be in charge of the hoist?

There are side-lights in connection with the evidence that bear a sinister aspect. The manager was not awakened at all until his usual hour on the morning of the accident. He left for Halifax before the inquest, had to be wired for and seemed by his evidence surprised that there should have been an inquest, at least he said that if he knew there would be an inquest he would not have gone away.

Neil McQuarrie, the father of Arthur, was called and gave his evidence. The poor man did not know much except that he was present at the time McEachern came to work and saw him sent down on the tub by Lawson, the foreman. After telling all he knew a dead been cross examined by the Inspector, Mr. Stuart took him in hand to whom Mr. McQuarrie answered: "The coroner sent for me this morning. I had no subpœna previous to that. I have no disposition to make trouble for the company on account of the accident. There was never any person suggested anything of the kind to me, etc."

We wonder what would have been done to the poor, broken hearted man if he had said that he would make trouble for the company? Surely, Mr. Stuart understands that the man and others like him are human. Only a cold blooded man but what would expect that in the first outbreak of their grief they would curse the company in its person and in its store. All through the investigation the Company, through Mr. Stuart, seemed to be striking at some invisible enemy, while the cause of the accident was not far to seek—namely sending men up and down in the tubs without a man constantly at the brake of the hoist. How they expected under the circumstances to escape accidents is hard to imagine. The hoist they use is a great improvement on the old style of hoist used in Goldenville, but in the old hoist the deckman had the levers constantly at his side. The new hoist wants the same attendance. Given that and good cables or ropes and tub bails that are not *cracked* and the system is safe enough.

It is evident to us that the last word has not been said about this case. Had the company taken care to have their hoist properly manned continuously, those young men would not have been hurled to death.

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WINTER ON MANITOULIN ISLAND.

A reader of The News writes: "I thought that perhaps you would like to know what the winter is like up here on Manitoulin Island. I think this is the longest winter I have ever seen. Some people here grumble about the cold. Some say that it is thirtyfive below zero at times, but I do not believe it is true. Six below is the lowest this winter by my thermometer in our sitting-room. Those others must leave their thermometers outside, or they would not drop so low. It is much colder out doors. I see by the papers that the mails are very much hampered by the bad roads. Well sir, although we are 450 miles from Toronto, we never miss a mail. For instance, your paper printed on Saturday evening, we have it on Monday at noon every time, and it is carried fifty miles over ice and snow roads. We have about five feet of snow on the level."

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THE PRESBYTERY OF PICTOU.

The Presbytery of Pictou met at Durham, Monday, the 22nd instant, at 1 p. m., in connection with the Ministerial Jubilee of Rev. James Thomson. Notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather a large congregation was present. Had the day been favourable the commodious church at Durham would have been crowded to the doors.

There was a large attendance of the members of Presbytery. The Moderator of Synod, Dr. Grant, Messrs. Macgregor Mackay, A. Cameron, and D. Stiles Fraser being present, were invited to sit and correspond. The exercises of the day began with public worship conducted by Mr. Rogers, who preached from Isaiah 44 : 3, his theme being "The Next Revival."

Mr. R. Cumming, who presided, presented an address to Mr. Thomson on behalf of the Presbytery.

Letters of regret on account of unavoidable absence were read from Dr. Murray, New Glasgow, and Rev. E. D. Millar, Yarmouth, also a letter from Mr. Albert Forbes, Sydney, on behalf of his father, Rev. J. F. Forbes, who is absent on a visit to the Holy Land.

Mr. Thomson replied in a very interesting and eloquent address in which he reviewed the history of the church during the fifty years which have elapsed since his induction.

Rev. D. Stiles Fraser, himself a native of West River, followed with a paper in which he eulogized the services rendered by Mr. Thomson to the historic congregation of West River, made reference to the young men brought up under the pastorate of Mr. Thomson who gave themselves to the ministry as well as to the influence which Mr. Thomson exercised over the young in leading them to decide for Christ and unite with His Church.

Remarks were made by the Moderator of Synod, Dr. Grant, and Rev. Macgregor Mackay and Rev. A. Cameron.

Throughout the day the choir gave efficient service. A solo was very acceptably rendered by Miss Logan, of Pictou.

The ladies of the congregation served refreshments at the close of the proceedings.

The thanks of the members of Presbytery and others who had been so kindly entertained by the good people of West River was tendered in graceful terms by Rev. R. Cumming.

LETTER FROM MONCTON.

Editor Eastern Chronicle,

DEAR SIR:—I noticed recently in your sue an editorial in which you say that a Government never made such a huge mistake as when Hon. Mr. Blair was appointed on the Railway Commission. While I admire and endorse your caustic and opportune effusions, you will pardon me for differing with you slightly on this one point.

I think a grosser mistake was made when Mr. Blair was taken into the Cabinet at Ottawa. During his regime as Premier of New Brunswick he was successful by the aid of such stalwart and consistent Liberals as Emmerson, McKeown and others in building up a party which enabled him to hold his position as premier of a coalition government.

This administration, while supported loyally by Liberals, was supported also and kept in power by a number of Conservatives and opposed by not only the bulk of the Conservative party but by a number of Liberals as well.

Thus, when Mr. Blair took his position in the Cabinet at Ottawa he was confronted with the dilemma of being supported when in local politics by Conservatives and therefore could not consistently in his opinion give any of their places to his Liberal followers. Conservatives were thus kept in positions on the I. C. R. and in other departments to the detriment and chagrin of Liberals who expected better treatment at the hands of those they had presistently followed for 18 years. Not only this, but scores of Tory officials and employees were promoted and had their salaries increased, in the face of the facts that Liberals were neglected and in many cases subjected to base indignities at the hands of Tory officials. So intensely disgusting did this state of affairs become, that it was said that the Tory officials and employees were did not to have realized as yet that the Liberal party had the ascendancy, and letters were written by indignant patronage protectors, or who should have been patronage protectors, asking at Ottawa which party was in power. All kinds of evasive answers were given by our N. B. Liberal leader, to whom these protests were made in many instances through our M. P.'s and local leaders who at last became discouraged and disgusted with being set aside and continually ignored.

We feel that a better day has dawned at last for N. B. We now have a leader of which any party or province should feel proud, a man that is a Liberal first, last and all the time. A man that will stand by his party through thick and thin, and who owes nothing to the Conservative party, for he has received nothing from them but slander and contumely and which on every occasion has fallen harmlessly to his feet like water from a duck's back. His personal popularity is spoken of and acknowledged by all. His constituted course as a statesman and a Liberal has won for him the united support of his party in New Brunswick and elsewhere. He can hold and has held the party together here as well and even better than the Hon. A. P. Blair ever did. No premier in N. B. ever won as sweeping a victory as he when he held that position and appealed to Liberals everywhere for their hearty support.

As far as St. John is concerned, he went into the fight handicapped, not only by his predecessors in the constituency but by the fact of his being only a short time in harness. Apart from this Mr. McKeown did not get the full Catholic vote, although a great many of them stood by him and worked hard. On the other hand, neither did he get the full Orange vote, as several prominent Orangemen took the stump, spoke and worked incessantly from start to finish for the Tory candidate.

Mr. McKeown is a fine young man, both popular and clever. To know him is to like him, and the Tories knew right well if he was successful he would be a tower of strength to the great Liberal party to which cause he is devoted and true. They therefore brought all the petty canvasses to play which were possible, not only among our Catholic friends but among our Orange friends as well. All these facts and the knowledge that St. John has in past years been very fickle in the choosing of her representatives, it is not at all marvellous that the reverse took place and all have to admit that Hon. H. R. Emmerson as our leader has lost none of his prestige or popularity in this suicidal accident of the city of St. John.

Let Liberals rest assured not only that St. John is not all, nor very much of New Brunswick, but as sure as the sun rises in the east the loss will be repaired and more than repaired at the next general election.

Yours truly.

LIBERAL.

Moncton, N. B., Feb. 24, '04.

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Probate of Will is dated Sept. 16th, 03.
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Sept. 28, 1903.

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