

Moffat's knowledge of 38 calibre revolvers and also in reference to an event which occurred in the province before Mr. Moffat had become a resident. Mr. Moffat's answer did not please the member, and he shakes," to which Mr. Moffat retorted that even that was better than being absolutely worthless like the honorable member for C. B. The little spat hurt no one, and was a diversion breaking the formality of the proceedings. The committee rose without having made any pronouncement, but it is believed that being unimpressed by the arguments, or reasons, set forth by the U. M. W. delegation, no opportunity will be afforded to the miners of Nova Scotia to declare their preference.

"John Moffat, the grand secretary of the P. W. A., told the committee that he was surprised to see a delegation from the U. M. W. talking to a committee of the legislature about harmony, as that organization had never made any attempt to co-operate with the P. W. A. A week ago, at the request of Hon. Mr. Murray, the head officials of the P. W. A. met the officials of the U. M. W. and asked them to join the P. W. A. 'There was no question of black balls, nor would any conditions whatever be imposed should the members of the U. M. W. offer for membership in the P. W. A.," said Mr. Moffat. Notwithstanding the fact that over 500 members of the P. W. A. were serving their country overseas, the membership of that body had recently shown a steady increase. The P. W. A. had been an incorporated organization for 37 years and represented the miners of Cape Breton in making wage agreements with the company for the men's benefit. 'The wage agreement,' said Mr. Moffat, 'was the best way to conserve the interests of the miners. The plebiscite asked for by the bill would only create disturbance instead of union. One hundred strikes had taken place in the United States in violation of wage agreements made by the U. M. W. In British Columbia there had been three violations of wage agreements by the U. M. W. since April last.'

"Mr. Moffat said that there had been no strikes in the anthracite fields of the United States where the method of the P. W. A. in making wage agreements had been followed, and there never had been a suspension of work, while the P. W. A. was making its wage agreements with the companies and there should be no suspension of work at this time. 'It is not necessary,' said Mr. Moffat.

"The P. W. A. has won public respect in this province, and wants to hold it," continued Mr. Moffat.

"Mr. Moffat further said that he knew nothing about the alleged discrimination at the mines of the Dominion Coal company and if there was any at all, it was due to the spending by the U. M. W. of a million dollars in 1909 in an attempt to disrupt the P. W. A. On that occasion the P. W. A. stood by its agreement with the operators and the U. M. W. struck, in violation of their agreement.

"In June last," said Mr. Moffat, "representatives of the P. W. A. made an agreement with the Dominion Coal company for a 10 per cent increase. This agreement was for two years from the 1st of January, 1917, and it was also a term of the agreement that if the cost of living increased in the meantime,

the men were to get more money. The cost of living has increased and consequently there has been an increase in wages up to 26½ per cent. The men were now negotiating further increases."

'Rubs' by Rambler.

Why is it, these days, little notice is taken, in a certain denomination of newspapers, of the continued high cost of articles entering daily into domestic consumption? Why is the question never asked why prices are lower in other countries than Canada? Why is it that there are not now so ferocious calls upon the government to up and take action, and bring to book those accounted to be responsible for high prices? Ah why! There are several reasons. First, Canada is not the dearest—from an economic standpoint—spot on earth at this present time; secondly, because those most responsible and most benefitted by high prices are the farmers, and the farmers have votes, and it has suddenly or gradually dawned upon the minds of newspapers of a particular persuasion that being voters, farmers, by all rules of diplomacy, are immune from attack, whether by commissions or in any other devious way. And, again, it may have dawned upon the minds of those who, for a long time, were foremost in attack that the government, when all is said and done, can do very little to mend matters. It was demanded of the government that they set a price on all kinds of produce. Sober reflection has perhaps had a beneficial effect in opening the mind's eye of many that governments are not at all times the undisputed masters of the situation. The British government thought to mend food matters in Britain by fixing prices, but the following from a late British paper shows the attempt was a failure:

"During the week we have had a striking example of the sort of trouble that arises through any attempt on the part of the government to fix prices. The government adopted a fixed price for potatoes for the producer and for the retailer, and there was an immediate threat that no potatoes would be available for the public. Into the merits of the case we do not propose at present to enter for the reason that all the facts are not known. But it is interesting to recall that at the beginning of the war there were people who wanted to fix the price of bread. They agitated very strongly, and only desisted when it was pointed out that we depended for bread upon foreign countries, and that to fix a price might be to divert food supplies somewhere else. So far as potatoes are concerned we are supposed to be self-supporting, and yet an attempt to fix the price resulted in the threat that the public should be without potatoes, though the matter has since been amicably adjusted. We do not fear a real stoppage of supplies, for in the last resort the government could requisition the stocks of potatoes in the country. They could not, however, requisition the stocks of wheat in America or the Argentine, for these will be sold to the highest bidder. That is the great argu-