

## MARITIME MINING RECORD.

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

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March 23

DR. McMILLAN, M. P. P. AND THE P. W. A.

In fulfilment of a promise made last issue we make further reference to certain statements of the M. P. P. for Inverness:

The relations between capital and labor, or the relation of the employer to his employees, or vice versa, have been prominent in the public mind for some time past and have not only seized upon the minds of students of political economy, but as well the minds of our legislators. Though the subject is one demanding the most delicate while diversified treatment, there are, we fear, a surprising number prepared to propound a perfect panacea, and prescribe an instantaneous cure. A wave of a wand, as it were, and the trick is done. To thoughtful minds the subject of "capital and labor" presents innumerable and perplexing difficulties, while to others, it seems, it is very easy of solution. We do not run away with the idea that our views will hasten a solution, but they may serve to expose some statements that might retard it.

We are told of the strained relations existing between employers and employees in this province and have been told of the supposed causes leading to the estrangement. We mean now, as concisely as possible, to criticise some things that have been told us, and to demur from the conclusions founded thereupon. The labor trouble in Glace Bay has furnished the occasion for bringing out many varied views on the labor question. If this question was asked: 'What has caused all this trouble in Glace Bay?' Dr. McMillan would hold up his hand and cracking his fingers, shout, 'I can tell you,' and forthwith take out a much thumbed paper named the Industrial Banner. The views of the Banner would scarcely demand attention were they not endorsed by a member of the local legislature. The views or statements of the Banner, as to the causes of the trouble, are, condensed, as follows:

1.—The P. W. A. had outlived its usefulness.

2.—It had lost the confidence of a majority of its members.

3.—The Gd. Officers were forced to submit the question to a referendum, with the agreement that the minority would loyally abide with the decision of the majority.

4.—The Gd. Officers refused to carry out the wishes of the majority, secured by the referen-

dum and declared the vote unconstitutional.

5.—Later, at a packed convention, from which many organizations favorable to the U. M. W. were excluded, they decided to maintain the dying P. W. A.

6.—The Coal company began a movement for the destruction of the U. M. W. by discriminating against its members.

These worse than misleading statements were heartily endorsed by Dr. McMillan. In answer to the first we assert, with emphasis that the P. W. A. had not out-grown its usefulness, and that it was as capable of securing betterments for its members as at any previous period.

2.—The referendum vote afforded no proof that it had lost the confidence of a majority of its members, because that vote did not to a very large extent, bring out the full vote of its members, nor the strength of its membership. At the time of the referendum there were 6,500 members in good standing in the order, exclusive of 500 who could not be so classed. The total membership may be put at 7,000, that is the membership for the purposes of the referendum, as it had been agreed upon that the names of all on the rolls of the lodges should be afforded the opportunity to vote. The total vote cast, including 97 spoiled ballots, was 5,405. The U. M. W. had a majority of 412 of the votes cast, but the number who did not vote was 1,595, and the presumption is that a large majority of that number were P. W. A. men. Why? Because a number of delegates who had been at the convention not only refused to vote, but persuaded other members to abstain from voting on the ground that the whole proceedings were illegal; and these delegates are still loyal members of the P. W. A. At the convention at which it was decided to have a referendum, the Grand Master was asked not to put the motion on the ground that it was illegal, as the special meeting had been called for a special purpose, namely, the 'perfecting of methods of offsetting U. M. W. organizers.' The Grand Master put the motion, declaring that the result would not affect the P. W. A. It will thus be seen that there was no agreement to abide by the decision of a majority; any such agreement was wholly ultra vires, even of the Grand Council, for the Constitution plainly asserts:

"This Association cannot be dissolved so long as one lodge with forty members objects thereto."

The objection to dissolution was all but unanimous in the Pietout, and many other lodges. This clause in the Constitution stopped the Grand Officers from carrying out the wishes of the, so called, majority. One lodge of forty members could carry on business legally, as the P. W. A.

5. As to a packed meeting, and the exclusion of many favorable to the U. M. W., the fact is, the misstatement as to packing, was thoroughly exploded in the courts in Sydney. It was shown, indeed, that the Gd. Secretary did not challenge certain delegates, opposed to him, when he could have done so. At the September meeting of Council, the whole referendum proceedings were thrown out by a majority of 49 to 28, proof that the P. W. A. men who had refrained from the referendum vote had stepped in when the proper time had come.