

the Government acquiring, if possible, all the areas or prospective areas in which coal is likely to occur elsewhere in the country.

I would respectfully suggest that in future no fee simple grants of the coal be issued to any person, so as to avoid the locking up of this valuable asset indefinitely. These areas should only be leased on an annual royalty to capitalists who would undertake to operate them, and who would enter upon their development with as little delay as possible, the lease to cease so soon as the lessees failed to fulfil their obligations. I do not think it would be advisable to lease all the areas to one company, as it might be to its advantage to operate but one mine and pay all the royalties thereon. Unless something of this kind is carried into effect ere it be too late, the mining industry may be seriously if not irreparably injured.

These remarks are founded upon the history of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, whose valuable coal areas were for a lengthened period held by absentees in England, under old leases from the Crown, to the great detriment of those provinces. In the end the Provincial Governments were compelled to repossess them at an enormous cost. With such an example before us we should try to avoid falling into a similar error.

Trusting these remarks will be received in the light in which they are intended viz., in the best interests of the country.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

JAMES P. HOWLEY.