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THE NEW FEDERAL COAL MINING REGULATIONS.

By an Order-in-Council, dated April 20th, 1910, certain significant changes are made in the Regulations for the disposal of coal-mining rights. The new Order-in-Council became effective on May 25th, 1910.

Under the new Regulations the term of lease shall be 21 years, renewable for a further term of 21 years, provided the lessee furnishes evidence, satisfactory to the Minister of the Interior, to show that he, the lessee, has complied in every respect with the conditions of the lease. As formerly the lease covered only 21 years, the change is desirable. Yet the question may fairly arise as to whether even 42 years is a sufficient period. Large investors may not think so. The surface equipment of collieries like, for instance, that of the Dominion Coal Company, represents millions of dollars. Each year sees additions to such capital expenditure. The life of a successful coal mine is long. Several of the collieries in the west possess sufficient reserves to predicate a possible life of 100 years. The Nova Scotian Government gave a 99-year lease to the Dominion Coal Company. Would it not be well for the Federal Government to follow this example? One particular aspect of this question is worth touching upon. Each lessee is permitted to acquire as much surface for mining operations as the Minister will grant him. Thus it is quite possible that a lessee, failing to obtain a renewal, may find himself at the end of 21 years in possession of surface rights and equipment but without any right to mine coal. If his surface rights cover the entry to the seams, a new lessee could obtain only the right to mine. In other words the property would be in a fair way to be tied up for all eternity.

The maximum area of a coal mining location is to be 2,560 acres, or four square miles. No person is allowed to hold more than one location. This regulation, of course, is easily evaded. The locator needs but to secure dummies. Hence the paragraph fails entirely of its object. In any case, four square miles is not an adequate area to provide for a coal mine. It would be far saner to fix the limit at from eight to twelve square miles.

The new Regulations provide that a person who has been granted a lease, and who subsequently abandons or assigns it, may, twelve months after the date of the lease, secure another location. This encourages the prospector. May it not, however, tend to restrict needlessly the activities of operating companies that wish to secure new locations?

Prospectors will appreciate the extension of time wherein applications must be filed. In cases where the location is distant more than 100 miles from the office