

tures. Besides these the fisheries of the province are valuable and lumbering plays a not unimportant part. We have then, in the province, what are accounted the three essentials to progress, with two valuable contributory side lines thrown in, as a standby, as it were. Some of the fisher folk may dispute the order of my classification, but scarcely successfully.

Of the several contributories to the prosperity of our province, I need scarcely repeat that coal is the greatest. Agriculture, of course, must be given a high place, but after all is said, coal, with the steel industry dependent upon it is, and is bound to remain king.

The growth and greatness of the western provinces lie in their boundless, fertile prairies; the future of Nova Scotia lies in what were once prairie and peat. The latter, through processes of nature, and the lapse of ages of time, has become solidified, and taken for its name coal. Without coal there would be no civilization as we know it now. Without coal Nova Scotia would be given a lower place than is now given it, I fear, by haughty, impulsive westerners. Since the worldwide depression precedent to the war, and since the additional disarrangement of business succeeding its declaration, one may say, of the several provinces of the Dominion, Nova Scotia was the least adversely affected, and that must go primarily to the credit of coal.

Twenty odd years ago it was freely predicted by the newspapers of British Columbia, that that province, in the matter of coal production, would wrest the laurels from Nova Scotia. At the time the prediction was stoutly disputed, and is still unfulfilled. If Nova Scotia has to step down from the first place as a producer of coal in Canada, I am of opinion that not to British Columbia, but to Alberta, she must bend the knee. As a producer of coal, Alberta has shown phenomenal growth in recent years, but still, it will be many years before she can hope to assume the place now held by this tight little province by the sea.

I was asked the other day, to give an estimate of the amount of capital invested in the coal and steel industries of the province. Making hasty estimate, I placed the sum at about ninety-five million dollars. Possibly I overestimated by two or three million dollars. A revision impels me to place the sum at ninety million dollars, divided almost equally between the two industries. A steel and iron trade champion might say forty-six million dollars in that industry, while one interested in coal might reverse the figures. This large sum divided as one will, affords proof of the great importance of these two branches of industry to the life present and future, of the province. A regrettable feature of the investment, in the case of coal principally, is that a large part of it is unremunerative, being locked up in collieries at present unworkable, from one cause or another. There remains the consolation that at some future time, the collieries now dormant, may spring into new and vigorous life.

The Dominion Coal company has saved the situation.

No small credit is due General Manager W. H. McDougall for the efficiency of his staff in general. But had he not in J. R. McIsaac, the transportation manager, and had the company not in A. Dick a salesman of highest repute, his efforts in procur-

ing a satisfactory output would be in large degree ineffective. Had I been asked three months ago, how the shipments of 1915 were likely to compare with those of 1914, without much hesitation the answer would have been "There can be no increase." And yet there is an increase, and a fair one, all things considered. The sole credit for this is due to the three last months of the year, and especially to the phenomenal shipments of the Dominion Coal company for November and December. These two months, as a rule, are classed among the slack months, as the St. Lawrence trade may be said to close with October.

The shipments for the calendar year 1914 were, in rough figures, 5,900,000 tons; this year the estimated shipments are 6,050,000, an increase of 150,000 tons, not a large increase certainly, but, seeing the increase occurred in the three last months of the year, one that may be taken as a token that 1916 will likely show the largest shipments on record.

Shipments to the St. Lawrence will be considerably short of last year. The high rate of charter is responsible for this. The Dominion Coal company unluckily had few old time charter boats, and new charters were very high. Neither of the two big companies took new contracts this year, but they were forced to fill old contracts, no matter the cost of transportation. I am going to hazard the opinion that the St. Lawrence trade, this year, was a losing one for these companies engaged in the trade. How much more than twenty-five cents a ton they lost on every ton that went up the river I do not think it would be polite to tell.

As a rule the companies deliver from 150,000 to 175,000 tons for the Canadian government railway at Levis; this year, I believe, the quantity does not reach 20,000 tons, and hence the scarcity of coal at all points on the government railway. Two contracts for water shipments, were entered into, I believe, by the railway. One was filled up to some 15,000 tons only, on account of the impossibility of securing steamers at a rate that would not entail a tremendous loss. The other contract was not filled because when the company was ready to supply the coal the railway was not in a position to receive it, and when ready to receive it the Coal company said it was not then in a position to supply it.

Seeing there has been a heavy falling off in the shipments to the St. Lawrence, our best market, how happens it that there is an increase in the year, over 1914. The answer is "the activity in the provincial steel trade." But for this the total shipments for the year would have shown a heavy decrease and this is said though at present, and for the past four weeks the mainland collieries especially, have not been able to meet the demand for domestic coals. In the closing months of the year much more coal could have been sold had the companies been able to furnish it. And why were they not? Largely owing to the insufficient supply of labor, and to accidents interrupting outputs at the mines. Take Pictou county.

The fire in the Allan mine caused a cessation of operations wholly for the first half of the year and is still interfering, though the output is now up to say 500 tons per day. Then the outbreak of fire at the Drummond colliery is responsible for the loss

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