

Guide-Advocate

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The Sydney Steel and Coal Strike

Most of the readers of The Guide-Advocate have no doubt been reading the dispatches in the daily press this week about the striking and rioting of the steel workers employed in the big steel plants of the British Empire Steel Corporation at Sydney, Cape Breton. We have read all about troops being rushed from Halifax and even from our own midst (London, Ont.) for the express purpose of quelling the riots and to protect the property of the corporation from the frenzied mobs. Then we read of a British warship being dispatched from St. John's, Newfoundland, to suppress the uprisings, and we wonder why should such things be in Canada and what are the reasons for all this controversy. We have no doubt that every one of the publishers of the Canadian Weekly Newspapers Association who had the privilege of inspecting the wonderful plants and mighty industries of this Corporation at Sydney while on their tour of the Maritime Provinces during the past few weeks, came home and read with greater intelligence these thrilling reports of lawlessness and wilful destruction of valuable property than we gave to almost the same news reports last summer when the same condition arose.

Two weeks ago the Weekly Press party spent two full days visiting the immense steel plants, the blast furnaces, the coke ovens, the steel rod, wire and nail plants with kindred industries, at Sydney and the coal mines, miners' homes and getting an insight into living conditions generally in this eastern extremity of Canada. While we cannot come back to Old Ontario and wisely point our finger at the root of this trouble, we can form individual opinions from personal observations of things we were supposed to see and many things we were supposed not to see. In a nutshell, the strike centres around a difference between the Organized Labor Unions of the Steel and Mine Workers and the British Empire Steel Corporation. About the only principal "bone of contention" seems to be "shorter hours and higher pay," but digging deeper we find that sinister, red undercurrent of eruption against society that seems to be steadily revealing itself in various parts of the country. The publisher of the Guide-Advocate talked with steel workers who, passing through their section of the plants, questioned men in the blast furnaces in the yards, in the coke ovens, in the coal collieries of New Glasgow and even inspected miners' homes, and on the whole we found very little dissatisfaction in fact as one man put it, when a strike was called by the union officials the majority of the men stayed at home because they were afraid to be found at work. Wages in all departments are as high as in any part of the country, ordinary laborers earning as high as \$4.00 per day, with a rising scale to expert mechanics at \$12 and \$14 per day; and the same may be said of the coal area. We found that wages were based accordingly and were indeed considerably higher than we have been lead to believe back here in Ontario. We have all read gruesome reports in various papers depicting the terrible conditions under which the miners live; that they are a poor, ignorant lot, laboring under conditions to which no other man would submit, living in hovels, with their families half-starved and naked.

Everything we had the privilege of seeing with our own eyes brands all these descriptions as "tommyrot." When we state that every publisher and his good wife walked through these various plants and down in to the coal shafts at New Glasgow in their multi-colored holiday togs this dispels the filth and dirt story. As for ignorance, most of the workers spoke French but readily changed to fluent English whenever questioned on any point. Although this strike cloud has been hovering for some time, and although there were at some instances open looks of hostility between occasional workers and plant officials who guided us through, and although these men were aware that our party of over two hundred newspaper men and women were there as guests of this huge corporation, every one of them was ready to answer any question with a smile, and when you picture a bunch of green printers' devils from Ontario who had never seen soft coal before, nor 100 lb. steel rails run out at the rate of 520 per hour, nor twin rivers of steel and iron flowing out of the huge blast furnaces, nor huge steel rods drawn down to the size of wire that Fred Mahony's boys and girls twist up into all sorts of kitchen utensils, down here at our own local Works, nor seen 7 1/2 tons of coal converted into coke in 7 minutes, nor seen these ingenious little ma-

chines rattling out various sized nails at a terrific rate, you can well imagine all the foolish questions we all fired at them, and when we come back home again and think of the innumerable times that each and every one of us displayed our absolute ignorance, no wonder they smiled. But they no doubt realized, as did their employers, that with the coming of this representative gathering of the press from every province and county of the whole Dominion, here was an unexcelled opportunity for each of them to give us all the information we desired and could carry away, and when a few of us were bold enough to suggest to our driver that we would actually like to inspect the interior of some of these so-called poor down-trodden miners' homes, he was perfectly willing to see what the good miners' housewife thought of it. After explaining our desire and purpose, and waving aside her embarrassment and apologies, we entered and she conducted us through the entire home. Whatever the good miner thought when she informed him of our intrusion we cannot say, as we were away down on the beautiful Bras d'Or Lakes, by that time. Without being too intimate in our description of this good lady's home, we can truthfully say that Harper Bros., our local furniture dealers, would revel in the joy of equipping every home in East Lambton with similar furnishings. There were excellent rugs on the floors, both a player-piano and a victrola in the living room, an abundance of first class furniture through out every room in the house, and on the whole, looked like one of those happy contented homes that every young couple craves. The majority of the homes are rented from the Company and the highest rent is \$8.00 per month, which also includes water, electric lights, running water, many more bathrooms than we can boast, and joy! O Joy! they buy coke all

the year round from the Company for \$2.25 per ton! Can you wonder that some of them are still dissatisfied?

NEW MUNICIPAL LEGISLATION

Owing to the rather abrupt dissolution of the Legislative Assembly, a smaller quota of amendments than usual was passed.

The Municipal Act authorizes county officials to pass by-laws fixing the date of the first meeting of the council to the Monday next preceding the fourth Tuesday in January.

Retiring allowances for municipal officers have been extended and grants may now be made by councils to hospitals in any municipality; provision is also made for the licensing of food shops.

The Assessment Act provides for adjustment of business assessment in case of a manufacturer who is also a retailer. Township councils in future may have assessment made between May 1st and September 30th.

The Municipal Franchise Act provides that in all cities, the names of persons who are municipal electors under the Municipal Franchise Act, 1922, may be entered in a separate or supplementary roll.

The Local Improvement Act is amended to allow for estimates of cost of unfinished work and unsettled claims in respect of land affected by work undertaken under the provisions of this Act, and also gives councils authority to amend by-laws to complete only part of a work, outlined in an original by-law.

The Municipal Arbitrations Act provides that proceedings begun under this Act shall not be discontinued by reason of the death of an official arbitrator, but that award shall be made by his successor; and provision is made for the appointment of a deputy official arbitrator, and his duties defined.

The Community Halls Act enacts that where a community hall, or a

THE STERLING BANK OF CANADA

SAVE, Because—
The path of wise economy is the shortest route to comfort.

hall and athletic field have been established for a school section, a township council may vest the property in the board of trustees.

The Public Health Act gives the Provincial Board of Health fuller control over the inspection of public water supplies in the province, and provision is made for the abatement of nuisances in respect of same, upon recommendation of the provincial board. Commencing March 1st, 1924, provincial board may make such regulations as may be deemed necessary in connection with the manufacture of beverages. A permit shall be obtained from the M.O.H. and the local Board of Health before any person engages in the manufacture, for sale, of carbonated waters, etc., or any dry substances in concentrated form, for the manufacture of any non-intoxicating drinks.

The Rural Hydro Electric Dis-

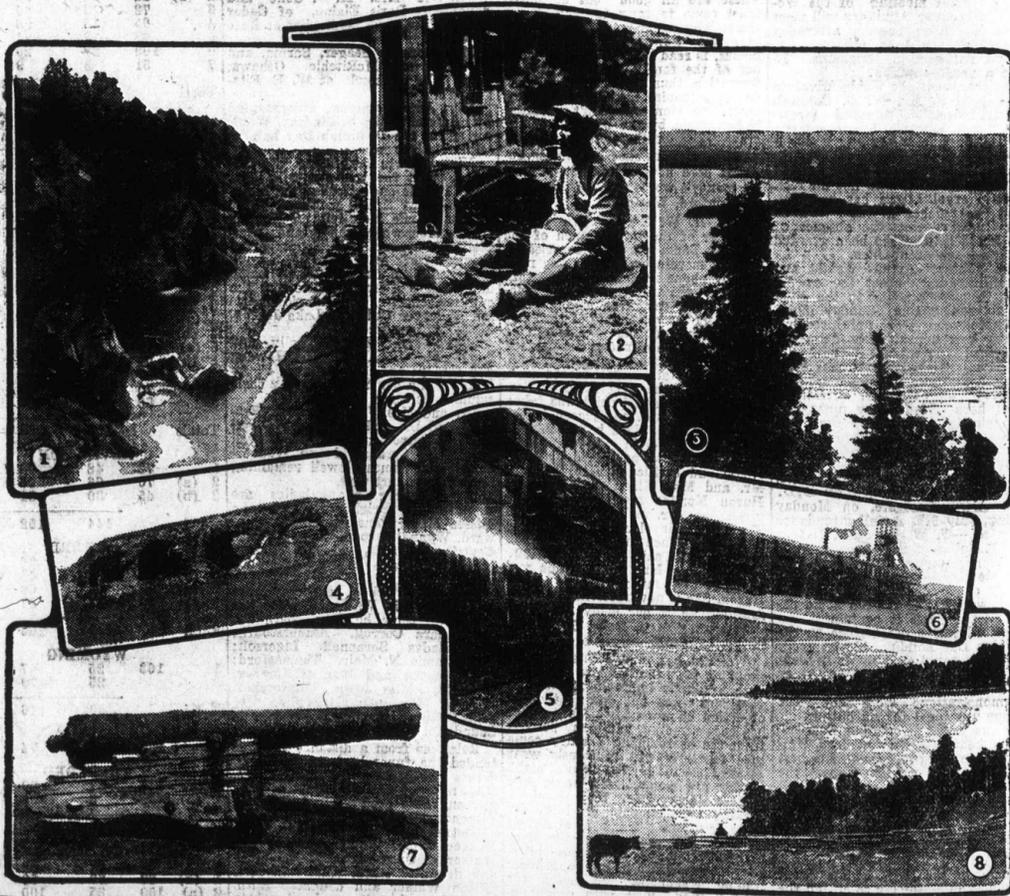
tribution Act specifies certain grants to a municipality which is a distributor of electrical power.

The Adolescent School Attendance Act relieves rural adolescents under certain conditions, from attending school.

The Tile Drainage Act increases the borrowing power of councils for work initiated under this Act, and slight amendments are made in the Registry Act whereby a registrar shall provide certain township officials with a list of conveyances of the next preceding year, at a fee of five cents for each instrument in the list.

The Highway Traffic Act, 1923, is a consolidation of: (1) The Motor Vehicles Act; (2) The Load of Vehicles Act; (3) The Highway Travel Act, and (4) The Traction Engine Act, and comes into force on December 31st, 1923.

Cape Breton Island - The Front Door of Canada



1.—A typical bit of rugged coast scenery in Cape Breton. 2.—Cape Breton Indian making butter pails. 3.—One view of the Bras d'Or Lakes. 4.—Ruins of old Fort Louisburg. 5.—Pouring molten metal Sydney Steel Mills. 6.—A coal mining plant near Sydney. 7.—One of the old guns at Fort Louisburg. 8.—Another view of the beautiful Bras d'Or Lakes.

There are few spots in Canada with greater romantic history than Cape Breton Island, through which, to Sydney and return, members of the Canadian Weekly Press Association travelled recently over the Canadian National Railways.

Before Columbus discovered America, Basque and Breton fishermen explored its harbors and there are many traces which indicate that as far back as 1,000 A.D. the venturesome Norsemen cruised its shores. When Shakespeare was writing his plays there were more than 300 English vessels fishing off the Cape Breton coast and French and Spanish fishermen had their recognized harbors along the seaboard. In the sheltered coves along the quiet salt water lakes, privateers and gentlemen-at-arms roved, building up a wealth of rich romantic tradition which still clings to its shores. While the French revolution in America was the greatest fortress in America was being built on this tiny little island, Louisburg is the historical center

of Cape Breton. Its erection cost more than \$25,000,000 in current valuation of money, and although it was commenced in 1720 it was not until 20 years later that it was completed. In 1744, when war broke out between England and France, it was attacked and captured by an expeditionary force comprised entirely of volunteers from New England. It was returned to France in 1848, but 10 years later was attacked by a British war fleet and again captured. With this fleet were General Wolfe, later conqueror of Quebec, and Captain Cook, whose name is linked forever with exploration and discoveries in the Pacific Ocean. Britain, however, considered the fortress too strong to take further chances with it and ordered it razed. Although a party of engineers, employing hundreds of men, worked for months at this task, the remains of its vast defences are still able to tell the tale of the valorous past.

Included within the term of "The Sydneys" are three towns, namely, Sydney, North Sydney and Sydney Mines. An important town which can lay claim to be within the district is Glace Bay, fourteen miles from Sydney.

Sydney is the principal city of the island. It is the Eastern terminus of the Canadian National Railways and a sea port of importance. It is the centre of the steel making industry of the Dominion, and around it, in a limited area, are situated eighteen or twenty of the greatest coal mines in North America. The industry is one which is growing in importance every year and one which contains unbounded possibilities, there being unworked as yet, a huge submarine coal field under the straits which separates Cape Breton from New-

foundland. Access to all points of interest and entertainment is made easy by the Canadian National Railways. There is an abundance of fine trout and salmon fishing as well as small game hunting.

Much of the route lies along the borders of the far-famed Bras d'Or, the great inland salt water lake of Cape Breton. The Bras d'Or waters have a surface area of 450 square miles, the width varying from less than a mile to 18 miles. So, too, does the depth vary, soundings having been taken at a depth of 700 feet in one part of Little Bras d'Or. The length of these lakes is about fifty miles, its waters being sheltered from the ocean, of which it forms a part, by hills of great beauty. Along its length it expands into bays, inlets and romantic havens, while picturesque islands dot its surface, singly and in fairy clusters. Along this stretch of country nothing is common, nothing tame, all is tuned to play upon the emotions the strings of keenest pleasure. Every variety of landscape meets the eye and the senses are never wearied. The scenery along the Bras d'Or route of the Canadian National Railways is unquestionably one of the most diversified and beautiful in the Dominion.

BY-

Some of

"Backward, turn back
O Time in thy flight
Take me back to the
Again; just for To

JANUARY

Verdict given at inquest disaster. Herman's arm broken while wailing of H. P. Lawrence. Liams elected reeve. Watford Junior beat Sarnia 15-1. Full ball elected county. Uttoxeter mill sold to Verdict of \$800 damage case of McClure vs. Local hockey club defeated J. E. Fowler fell broke his wrist. R. C. M. dence burglarized. E veterans met at Watford den purchased grocery Sarnia. A. Mavity sold to S. E. Thompson. G. of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Brooke. W. H. McM warden of county.

Married—Dr. R. F. Miss Wicklow. Geo. W. Miss Ida Clark. Thos. M. Miss Alice A. Dunn. Ar

Deaths—Mrs. John Dr. A. S. Fraser. Olive Brooke; Mrs. Jos. Teill McLean; Rev. Geo. C. Mott; Dr. A. Scott, F. Williams of Warwick droy; R. J. Stevens at Daniel McKay, Arkona

FEBRUARY

Douglas-Lacy banquet. House. Double wedding family at Napier. 6th give ball. Farewell and family of Warwick hockey game at London. Regt. team beat Watford game protested. Ed. chased the Parker farm Mrs. (Col.) Campbell's her leg. One foot of snow 10th. D. O'Neill appointed agent of Watford. D. R. ing contest at Sarnia. appointed Registrar. Surrogate Court at St. Fleming's house on 4th Watford won at hockey 12-4. The juniors defeated Waterloo 9-4, and Watford Firemen's banquet to G. F. A. Saunders. Judgment of Hogg vs. Brooke.

Alvin Zavitz had injured in runaway accident. Married—J. Landan McWaters; J. Calvert Phillips; John A. McK. Annie Laws; Wm. John Minnie Mains.

Deaths—Frank Mitchell; Geo. Luckins Sarnia; Henry Love; Robt. Henderson, Brock; Whorter, Arkona.

MARCH

Col. Kenward elected Brigade, J. D. Brown vacancies. Watford 5-4 at hockey. F. R. shoulder dislocated in sensation of P. M. Saunders by Havelock son appointed agent of Sarnia. Sons of Sec Alvinston burnt. Sal estate property. Daug Young seriously injured derrick pole. Jos. Beal to England. Robt. L. in woods near Ker Thormicroft, Plympt. Broke her arm. Fire stave damaged by fire residence estate property. Ber of Wainstead wrecked by G. T. R.

APRIL

R. Roche purchased Iroquois hotel, Petrol to Mr. and Mrs. W. Warwick friends. D. settled his claim against Wainstead wreck in \$1000. Harry Taylor burnt by torch while presentation to Mr. Hobbs prior to their Warwick. Fred Lancel suicide at Camlachie.