

Maritime Mining Record

The MARITIME MINING RECORD is published the second and fourth Wednesday in each month.

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

Advertising rates, which are moderate, may be had on application. Single Copies 5 cents.

R. DRUMMOND, PUBLISHER.

STELLARTON N. S.

February 8th 1906

Rubs by Rambler.

Will the Halifax Herald please take notice that since Mr. Chamberlain began his propaganda there have been no fewer than forty-two bye elections in Britain. In no case did the Anti Chamberlains suffer defeat, in every instance, except perhaps one, the former conservative majority was largely decreased and in no fewer than sixteen out of the forty two elections the liberals wrested seats from their opponents, and withal the Herald is optimistic as to its friend Mr. Chamberlain's success. The conservative majority of 135, four years ago, has been reduced to say 85, for besides the seats lost at elections, equal to 32 votes on a division, they have lost ten or eleven votes, equal to twenty or say twenty-two on a division, by the defection of former supporters. It seems as if Mr. Balfour is determined to hang on to office, in the hope of something turning up, for he must know by this time that if he appealed to the country on any retaliation, or other half way protection policy, his party would not only be defeated but overwhelmed.

Than the possible saving of life and the alleviation of pain there is no subject of more importance in the department of mine management. The numerous clauses of the Mine Act referring to timbering of the mine, the spragging of places during the operation of undercutting, the restrictions as to the quantity of powder to be taken into the mine, the conditions under which shots shall be fired, the use of safety lamps, the removal of noxious gases &c. &c. have for their object primarily the safety and comfort of the workman, and only secondarily the preservation of property. It is probably well, it was wisely enacted, that the prevention of accidents should come first and before all. The fact that prevention is better than cure and should therefore first be sought after is no reason, seeing accidents will occur, why cures should be wholly or partially ignored. Our colliery underground managers are well versed in the means for the prevention of accidents. How many of them could take intelligent charge, and apply first restoratives or palliatives to the injured until the arrival of a qualified medical attendant? I may be wholly mistaken in the opinion that the number is limited, very much limited. If I am right then there is something wrong which ought to be at once remedied. We have arrived at the time when one of the qualifications for a certificated overman or underground manager must be that he is familiar with the subject,—First aids to the injured. It may be asked "Would I have the Mining Instructors impart the necessary information to the candidates; and would I

have them examined on this subject by the Board of Examiners? My answer is no. Neither the Instructors nor the Examiners may be competent or have themselves the qualification. At present a candidate must furnish to the Board certain certificates as to age, time employed in a mine &c. before being accepted as a candidate. Extend the system a little and ordain that he must have a certificate from a medical man or Board that he has a satisfactory knowledge of first aids to the injured. How would the candidates qualify and how would such certificates be obtained? That should not be a hard matter. This way, for instance, I am sure Dr. Kendall, my queer but kindly friend, were he living in a mining village, would gladly devote an hour for a stated number of evenings in giving lessons on the subject. Dr. McKay of Reserve would I am sure willingly do the same. At the end of the short and easy course Dr Morrison of Dom. No. 1 or Dr. McKeen of Glace Bay both of whom would gladly cooperate could examine Dr. McKays pupils, and give them certificates, if they displayed sufficient knowledge, and Dr. McKay could reciprocate in the case of Dr. McKeen or Dr. Morrison's pupils. The chief merit of this idea is that it is very easy, and very economical. Of course if Dr. Kendall can arrange with the government that the medical instructors and examiners should receive a small honorarium, I for one would be delighted. It is possible however, that both Dr. McKay and Dr. McKeen would passively resist any attempt of a grit government to thrust remuneration upon them, therefore a purely voluntary system might be the best to adopt at the inauguration of the movement. If no body makes a move soon to bring the subject to the notice of the government, I may do it myself even at the risk of being styled a nuisance and a busy body.

Talking of the qualifications of candidates reminds me that there is a kindred subject that worries me a little. I had something to do with the first suggestions as to the composition of the Board of Examiners but, thank goodness, I had nothing to do with the way they should carry out their work or the manner of their examination of papers, and the mode at arriving at conclusions. The fact is I never was in favor of the system, which has been in vogue from the first, under which a candidates papers are passed upon. My idea is and always has been that those who pass final judgement as to the qualifications of a candidate should not know, from the papers, upon whom their judgement is being passed. Each examiner should be in a position conscientiously to declare: "There is the number of marks that paper is entitled to, be the writer townsman or stranger, and here is the number that this paper is entitled to, be the writer from the Mainland or the Island." That's the way it should be, and that's the way it isn't. I am not for an instant going to hint even remotely that the members of the Board have ever followed a procedure said to be popular with some members of the House of Assembly, which consists in one member going to another and saying "You help me to scratch my back,"—that is pass some little bill—"and I'll help you to scratch yours," but I do say that the temptation to do so is present at every examination. I am not going to say, I am not in a position to say so, that any member of any Board, ever succumbed to the solicitation of a candidate or a candidate's friends, to put the marks on papers higher than their merit mayhap, but I do say that members at some past examinations have been urged to do so. The most honest of men have prejudices. They may not be sensible of the fact, indeed many of our prejudices are subconscious, but they are with us all the same, and it is