

## AROUND THE COLLIERIES.

Mr. Charles Fergie, in reply to a request of a portion of his employees for the "check off", hinted that he might be inclined to grant it to a union with a Nova Scotia charter or act of incorporation. Mr. Fergie is justified in demurring to collect lodge dues for a union under foreign domination.

Mr. Tonge, chief mining engineer of the Dominion Coal Co., replying to a question, said he could not see why his company should be expected to recognize two different labor unions. Neither can the Record. Continual prayer would have to be offered up for the mine managers and officials generally if they were compelled to recognize two antagonistic labor unions. In order to live the two unions would have everlastingly to be bidding one against the other, and a concession granted by one would be followed by the demand for a still greater concession by the other. With two unions at a colliery the manager would have in very truth "the time of his life."

The Record has been informed that Mr. I. L. Brass, who was general manager of the Inverness Railway and Coal Company at the time Cornelius Shields filled a similar position with the Dominion Steel and Coal Corporation, died a few days ago. For some time previous to his death he had occupied the position of assistant to the general manager of the Oregon Short Line. Mr. Brass was well known among mining men in this province. He in his day filled many important positions on railways. As a business man he was very highly thought of, and being of a genial disposition had very many friends. His salutation to the editor of the Mining Record when remitting his subscription invariably was, "Bang may ye'r lum reek." Ah, though his lum is now reckless, there remain pleasant memories which will burn bright, and that without stoking. The deceased was a Scotsman.

The question was put to the Record recently by one in search of coal and who could not get as quick delivery of Pictou coal as he would like: "What do you know of Inverness coal?" The answer was: "In Halifax it has the reputation of being a first class coal for domestic purposes." "I wonder," he said, "if I can get a car, I hear that it is a fine burner, easily lighted, needs little attention, is free from soot and clinkers, leaves a trifle only of ash, is economical, and as it is free from soot, &c., is preferable to hard coal for cooking purposes."

"That will do," he was told, "if it fills the bill like that, then certainly it is the ideal coal. You better try and get a car if you can." He tried and failed as Inverness, like the other collieries, was booked a long way ahead. It is pleasing to learn that Inverness coal has received a home market. The company has had hard hoeing, and went into a receiver's hands, owing to losses sustained by water shipments to the St. Lawrence. It did not go into Receiver McGillivray's hands a day too soon.

Ten years ago, less and more, the Record was accounted a knocker because it asked to be shown where there were immense deposits of iron ore of present commercial value. The mines department is responsible for the statement that there is more iron ore in Nova Scotia than there is coal to smelt it. It hasn't looked like that for the past ten years. In 1893 102 201 tons were produced. For ten years after that shipments declined until 1906, when they jumped to 97,820 tons. Since 1907 the bottom has fallen out of the business. There were no shipments in 1909, 1914, 1915, and there will be none in 1916. In 1896 Ontario produced 2,770 tons of iron ore. In 1915 the shipments were 394,429 tons. The fact is that today Ontario is the one iron ore producing province in the dominion.

Mr. F. W. Gray's article on coal production in Nova Scotia for the six months of 1914, 1915 and 1916 is given scant justice in the Busy East. One could pass by the figures—38,000 tons—given as the output of the Inverness colliery, instead of 138,000 tons, and put it down to a compositor's carelessness, but when Mr. Gray is made to say "The Inverness Coal Company's production has been much decreased by the fire that occurred in November last, which has compelled the company to abandon its workings in the Drummond Main Seam," it looks as if the compositor and the proof reader were in conspiracy. The Inverness Coal Co. is doing nicely, and the Record ventures the opinion that though Mr. Macergetic be a canny Scot, yet under his able and energetic management the bond holders may be gladdened by the soon announcement that a payment will be made to account of back interest.

That the miners of Britain are exempt from military service is shown by the following. The hint is thrown out that if they don't work steadily they will be marched to the front:

Mr. Asquith addressed a national conference of representatives of the mining industry. He pointed out that there was a decrease in 1915 of roughly 34,000,000 tons on the pre-war output. This was due primarily and mainly to the number of miners who had enlisted. Coal was our chief, and in many ways our most necessary, export; it helped to feed the country by bringing in food from abroad, and it helped to pay for the war. He made no charge against the miners, who had risen patriotically to the level of the national cause, and of whom, he was sure, the great bulk positively detested shirkers. If absenteeism could be reduced to a minimum, the shortage in output would be made good. Mr. Herbert Samuel remarked that miners were exempted from military service so that they might get coal. If a man deliberately, persistently, week after week, did less than he could, should he remain exempt? asked the Home Secretary. To this question there was an overwhelming reply of "No," qualified by some dissent, from the audience.