

than \$2.50 per day. In other words the average Cape Breton miner can earn to day \$410, (or two and a half times) over what it was possible for him to do 20 years ago. I am neither saying he was too low paid then, or too highly paid now, I am only endeavouring to show that while there are, from some quarters, expressions of discontent, there is less cause to-day than at any prior time.

Let me here correct another misrepresentation. We have been told that the severity of the conditions under which a miner works, soon tells on him and that prematurely he grows old and he becomes enfeebled. Rank nonsense. Some of our oldest miners are among the healthiest of our population. The other day I met a miner nearing the allotted span coming home from his work in the mine. I asked him, "How are things going?" The reply was "Oh, pretty well." The next question put was, "How are you doing?" and here is the reply. "Nicely, never did better, this is the best year for me since the old times." The old times meant a quarter of a century or more ago.

I have before me a list containing names and ages of workers at a colliery employing, say, 300 men. It will no doubt be a surprise to Chronicle readers to be informed that of the total, about 10 per cent., or to be accurate nine and a half per cent of the total men are over sixty years of age. It is retorted "That is an antiquated colliery?" May be, yet it is a colliery that can send up a large amount of coal at as low a cost, as any of the big modern mines. In asking for fair play for our sturdy miners, it is surely unnecessary to frame such pleas as that their work soon makes them feeble and unfit. The strenuous nature of their employment, and the risks they assume from fires, falls and flooding, are of themselves plain sufficiently strong to command for them a full measure of justice, in the matter of wages, and treatment generally.

Besides the causes already mentioned, there is yet another reason for the lesser quantity of coal sold than expected, and that is the shortage of cars. Some of the causes may have been preventable, this surely was. It will scarcely be a sufficient reply to say that it is now impossible to secure cars from the builders. Six years or more ago, the late Mr. Wade, M. P., publicly stated that, in his opinion, the output of our mines in ten years would be ten million tons. Others besides him gave expression to similar views. Did the railway department take no stock in the predictions, or did they not calculate to handle any of the increased output. Then was the time, surely, to begin preparations. An industry that expends yearly, in wages, six to eight million dollars ought to have its interests well attended to. Scarcity of cars has been a complaint for years, and from all present appearances there is to be no speedy relief.

THE HERALD ON MINE MANAGEMENT.

"It is also being recognized that though the coal industry in Nova Scotia is a very old one, yet it is doubtful whether the present public management of the Provincial coal fields is wise or foolish. They are leased to private companies for terms of years—some of them very long; but it is considered doubtful whether these companies are conducting mining operations in a proper scientific and publicly provident manner, or are merely picking out such bits of the coal deposits as appear most profitable, and are at the same

time destroying over four times as much of those deposits as they recover for market. This is a matter engaging some public thought and should call for public investigation. In short there is a public demand not only that we should make more use of the natural resources of the Province, but that we should make a better use of them."

The foregoing paragraph is from an editorial in the Halifax Herald, under the title 'Past and Present'. Just what is meant by the 'public management of the Provincial coal fields' is not made clear. Were it not for the context one might think reference was made to the present system of leasing the lands on royalty. If so a better word than 'management' could be employed. The statute defines under what conditions leases may be granted; the mines department can only follow these instructions. Are we to infer that the leases are granted in some cases contrary to statute, or that royalty is not regularly collected in each case. The statute also provides for an examination of the workings by government inspectors. Perhaps the Herald means that this work is not being properly carried out. The context might lead one to believe that this was the intended inference, for the Herald hints at glaring incapacity or gross ignorance, in the management of the mines. If it be true that the managers of the mines are incompetent, and are besides great wastrels, taking from the areas on which one ton for every four they destroy, then certainly there is something radically wrong with the 'public management' with the governments method and manner of inspection. Whether of recent years or at this time, there has been, or is, modern scientific, or to use a readily intelligible word, effective 'public management', it is not the Record's intention at this time to discuss. Probably a vindication of government 'inspection', or a defence, may, more fittingly, come from papers like the Morning Chronicle, Sydney Record, Eastern Chronicle and Amherst News, which have sanctioned, say, to speak for, and in behalf of the local government. The Record's part at present is to endeavour to defend the management of our coal mines against the attacks of unthinking, uninformed disparagers. In doing so there must be a defence in a way of government inspection, for if the methods of the managers are modern and economical, then government inspection, if no praise is due it, cannot come in for blame.

The hint that our mine managers are merely picking 'out such bits of the coal deposits as appear most profitable' shows a degree of animosity or a depth of ignorance scarcely pardonable. A coal mine is not like a garden where one may go to a bush and pick off the best bloom and then to another bush and do a similar thing. In a coal mine the operators cannot jump from one part of it to another and take a 'bit' here and a 'bit' there according to fancy. That would neither be practicable or possible. Their prime endeavour is to get the most coal possible out of the smallest territory, to confine operations to the most limited space consistent with economy and fair outputs. The Record does not assert that there never was a time when the management of our coal mines picked out the most profitable bits; it is however prepared to assert that such is not the practice to-day. It is possible that prior to the year 1882, under, be it noted, conservative local