

Springhill mines are at the present time unique among the mainland collieries of Nova Scotia.

Pit-timber supplies.—One effect of the war upon the coal mining industry in Great Britain has been to restrict very severely the importation of pit timber into Great Britain. The supply comes chiefly, or almost altogether, from the countries surrounding the Baltic. Trade papers in Great Britain report an increase of 50 per cent. in the price of pit props, and an interesting sequel has been enquiries in Canada for pit-timber supplies, made through the British Trade Commissioner.

So far as Nova Scotia itself is concerned the available pit timber is not more than sufficient for the needs of the local coal mines, but New Brunswick and Quebec should be able to furnish pit props and timber in sufficient quantities.

Apropos of this question it is interesting to note that an investigation is at the present time on foot under the joint auspices of the Dominion Forestry Department and the Mining Faculty of McGill University, having for its object the collection of information regarding the life and use of pit timber in Nova Scotia, and the possible economies through proper selection of timbers and the use of preservatives. Up to now practically nothing has been done in Nova Scotia in the way of treating pit timber as a preventative against decay and decay-causing fungoid growths. Reference has been previously made in this correspondence to the findings of the reconnaissance of survey of Nova Scotia forests, carried out under the direction of Dean Fernow some few years ago, which showed that Nova Scotia was really but poorly provided with valuable timber, and pleaded for some centralized and intelligent system of tree-planting and fire-guards. European enquiries now develop the significant fact that Nova Scotia possesses barely sufficient timber for her own requirements, notwithstanding that large tracts of Nova Scotia are of such a character as to be of no value for any purpose but that of timber raising. The problem is one that will have to be tackled by the Provincial Government, because no single individual or group of individuals can undertake the work hoping for private profit. The length of years needed to produce saleable lumber, or even such small lumber as pit props, from seedlings, is too long for private enterprise. Even large corporations have to pay dividends, and the shareholders of to-day cannot be made to see the advisability of expending present revenue for the prospective benefit of the shareholders of fifty years to come.

ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT OF OIL WELLS.

A bulletin issued by Canadian General Electric Co., Limited, describes electrical equipment of a large number of wells and gives tables of actual comparative operating costs for a considerable range of conditions showing excellent results obtained.

A shallow oil find has been reported on the Moses Laforet farm concession 8, Sandwich East township, in Essex County. Laforet drilled through 60 ft. of surface and 50 ft. of rock, first striking gas and then water with a small proportion of oil, about an inch of oil showing on top of a pail of water. John Robinson, a neighbor, struck a small gas flow three years ago, which he is still using for household purposes; but oil was not previously encountered.

CYANIDE PRODUCTION IN UNITED STATES.

"Before sodium cyanide—the commercial product which is now used in gold and silver mining the world over—was placed on the free list, 90 to 95 per cent. of the consumption in America was supplied by domestic production," says F. W. Braun, of the Braun corporation, who is an authority on the conditions which govern its production and consumption.

"Following the removal of the tariff, the reverse became the case—90 to 95 per cent. has been imported, principally from Germany.

The largest plant, although partially dismantled and operated at about one-tenth of its capacity is still in existence. Before the tariff was removed, the United States produced 16,000,000 to 18,000,000 pounds a year, of which the large plant located at Perth Amboy, N.J., yielded 14,000,000 pounds. The owners will probably find it advisable under present conditions to resume operations, provided they can be assured of some protection in the future against foreign importations.

GRANBY.

Operations of the Anyox property of Granby continue satisfactory, according to official reports. Many of the difficulties encountered just after starting the smelter have been overcome. Part of the time the full battery of three furnaces has been operating and as the need for alterations arose one of the stacks has been temporarily shut down. The management had counted on the Midas mine in Alaska being in position to start production during mid-summer, but delays in deliveries of material and the unsatisfactory metal market conditions have made this impossible. It is probable, however, that operations on a limited scale will be commenced late in October or early in November.

THE MANUFACTURE OF COKE IN THE UNITED STATES.

According to Edward W. Parker in a bulletin published by the U. S. Geological Survey the cause of conservation has been as signally and materially advanced during the last few years in the manufacture of coke, through the development of retort-oven practice, as has been evinced in any branch of mining and its collateral industries. The new era in coke making in the United States had its modest beginning in 1893 in the construction at Syracuse, N.Y., of 12 Semet-Solvay by-product retort ovens which were operated in connection with the chemical works of the Solvay Process Co. Progress at first was slow, for among furnace men a strong prejudice existed against the product of the retort oven which lacked certain physical characteristics, particularly the silvery luster and musical "ring" of the beehive coke, to which for many years they had been accustomed. It required a decade for the young rival of beehive coke to establish a firm hold, for, although production increased each year from the time the first plant was constructed, by 1902, the total quantity of retort coke produced was less than 1,400,000 tons, whereas in the same period the production of beehive coke had increased nearly 15,000,000 tons.

The second by-product coking plant to be erected in the United States was one of 60 Otto-Hoffmann (now known as "United-Otto") ovens built for the Cambria Iron Co., at Johnstown, Pa., in 1895, and it was the