

## MARITIME MINING RECORD.

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BRITISH COLLIERS.

—BY THE EDITOR.—

A few years ago some British importations, through the Halifax Herald and any paper that would give them entrance, told the half awake backward, Nova Scotia miners how well the British coal miners unions managed affairs. They were told that out of small contributions, large funds had accumulated, and that disputes were settled in a twinkling of an eye, if not, indeed, before they arose. All that disaffected pit men had to do was to notify the union; the agent of the union would call upon the master, and tell him what must be done, and it was done. There were sceptics who did not swallow this at a gulp. And they were right. The fact is not a day, it may be said not an hour, passes but a dispute between men and masters arise, terminating, as a rule, in a strike or a lock-out. The leaders or union officials do indeed accomplish a good deal, but they are no more astute, are no more able to accomplish impossibilities than those of other countries. A good deal more work is accomplished in Nova Scotia, with far less noise, than by most of the societies in Britain. The men in Nova Scotia, it is to be hoped, are more loyal to their leaders. In fact a strike could not well be carried on in Nova Scotia with the Grand Council against it. In Britain it is different. Take the case of the South Wales miners who have been many months on strike. The mens leaders made a compromise with the masters, which all impartial people thought fair and reasonable. Would the men adhere to it? Not a bit. They spurned the offers, and first called for increased contributions, from the federation, followed by the demand that a general strike should be declared until their demands were acceded to. No such request is likely to be granted. The leaders of the Durham miners say it would be madness for the men to strike, and leaders in other parts share similar opinions.

In many respects the Durham miners are in advance of their fellows in other parts of Britain, and still they are not so far advanced in some things as the miners of Nova Scotia. In the matter of dress and tidiness of person, the British miner lags behind. He has not very much ambition, apparently, to appear twig. Force him to put on a white collar, and the chances are, in many cases, that when he gets round the corner, or can get into a 'closs' he will whip it off and don the everlasting cravat. It is not to be thought that all, in respect of dress, are spunkless, but very many are. Though many

miners in Nova Scotia do not avail themselves of the opportunity of a pit head washing and dressing after their days work, it is improbable that even those who neglect to 'brush up', would go so far as to vote against the establishment of pit head baths, and yet that is just what the Durham miners, as advanced in most respects as any in the Kingdom, have done. By an overwhelming majority they have decided to oppose the institution of pit head baths. There is certainly no accounting for tastes. And there is far less necessity now for 'changing clothes' on the surface in Nova Scotia than in Britain, for in the former the pit clothes need not 's'nell the house' with oil as safety lamps are the rule, while in Britain, it may be said they are not in general use.

The troubles of the Eight hour day are not yet over and strife may follow for a long time yet. The latest 'kick' of the men is against a three shift day, where formerly there were two shifts of, say, nine hours or so, it is now necessary, in order to obtain the output, with a reasonable amount of development work, to have three eight hour shifts. The men do not like this and by a vote of 10,000 odd to 9,000 odd the Durham miners have decided to strike in order to secure the abolition of the three shift system. The Durham miners were never much in favor of the eight hour day and presumably they are less in favor than ever. By the way Mr. J. Wilson, M. P. publicly stated the other day that "there was nothing in the British mining nation so favorable as the terms secured by the South Wales miners, and yet they had repudiated them, and were sending missionaries to advocate a national strike. To strike would be madness."

## THE BRITISH COAL MINES BILL.

The British Mines Bill is getting through the committee stages slowly. On every clause almost there is much discussion and more than one amendment. Sometimes the government accepts the amendments and sometimes it opposes, and now and then it is beaten, as the committee is non-partizan and consists of those taking the operators, the miners and independent views. In order to show the various views prevailing and the character of aims of the bill, the following report of a meeting of the committee will suffice. By the way it should be noted that the views expressed as to electricity in coal mines run on fours with views expressed by members of the Nova Scotia Mining Society at their yearly meeting and are counter to the views of those in the U. S. interested in the more efficient management of coal mines:

"Clause 57, making provision for various precautions in connection with steam boilers in mines, was dealt with.

The Solicitor-General for Scotland (who is in charge of the bill) moved an amendment to make it clear that the provisions are to apply not only to boilers below but boilers above ground.

This was agreed to. On the motion of Sir A. Markham, an amendment was adopted providing that every watertight should be protected by an efficient outer cover to prevent injury to persons employed.

Sir A. Markham moved to alter the provision that every steam boiler shall be examined thoroughly by a competent person at least once in every 14 months.