

steadily. These operations, however, need not be referred to further, as they are of so recent a date.

The early records of the coal trade were not accurately kept by the Provincial Crown Land Department, but as far as the writer is able to learn, there were extracted between the years 1877 and 1880, in round numbers 6,000,000 tons of coal from the Main and Deep seams.

A reference may appropriately be made to the quality of the coal in this great seam which for so many years proved a source of wealth to Pictou county, and to what measure of success attended the efforts of the lessees to extract coal from it.

The main seam may be divided in general terms into an upper and a lower bed. Each of these beds is about twelve feet in thickness, of workable coal. The upper divisions in the Store, Bye and Foord pits was better in quality than the lower; accordingly in these pits we find that the upper layer of the top portion won out, and the lower bed proved good enough to be worked conjointly only in the Dalhousie pit. Workings were carried on in the coal to a height of some twenty-four feet, and an inadequate scale of pillarage led to a crush causing the loss of the pit and of an immense amount of coal. A description of the systems of working adopted at these collieries need not be given here, but it may be described as forming an immense extent, some four hundred acres, of excavations leaving blocks of coal to support the roof. As each colliery was connected with that preceding, it became finally a vast burrow, and the fires which occurred from time to time became incapable of isolation or extinction, and remain so to-day at numerous points.

Reference has already been made to the fact that in the Store pits the coal was found to deteriorate in the upper part of the seam to the eastward and westward. A similar state of affairs was found to exist in the Bye pit workings.

The change for the better in the quality of the coal in the Dalhousie pit, already referred to as sunk beyond this zone of inferior coal superficially indicated by the course of Coal Brook, was only comparative. The "fall" or top layer of coal disappeared and the lower part of the upper portion of the seam was higher in ash than the coal met at the western face of the Bye pit workings. This is shown by the following set of analyses from "Acadian Geology" of the three divisions of the upper part of the seam as worked in the Bye and Dalhousie pits. The first sample is from a point about 700 yards east of the Bye pit, the second from a point about 700 yards west of the Bye pit, and the third from a point about one-half a mile west of the Dalhousie pit: