

## COAL MINES OF PICTOU.

As coal mining ranks amongst the highest of the mining interests of the Dominion, we will furnish a brief account of those of Pictou.

We give the names of the leading collieries :—

INTERCOLONIAL COAL COMPANY :—Drummond Colliery.

GENERAL MINING ASSOCIATION :—Foord Pits, Albion Old Mines, Foster Pit, Dalhousie Pit, and Cage Pit.

ACADIA COAL COMPANY :—Acadia Colliery.

NOVA SCOTIA COAL COMPANY :—Nova Scotia Slope.

MONTREAL AND NOVA SCOTIA COAL COMPANY :—Montreal and Pictou Pit.

PICTOU COAL MINING COMPANY :—Marsh Colliery.

The Nova Scotian coals may be divided into three qualities : steam coal, gas coal, and house coal. As regards steam coal. In a few cases, determinations of sulphur have been made, but from this impurity the greater part of the coals now worked in the Pictou region are quite free. The general very light colour of their ashes attests their freedom, when properly selected, from sulphur in combination with iron, as *pyrites*, and amongst the coal examined, the ashes of but few contain any appreciable amount of sulphate of lime, and therefore not inclined to form a clinker adherent to the grate bars. One point of difference between the Welsh steam coal and the Pictou coal is this, whereas the former gives a larger amount per ton of steam evaporating power, it also gives a larger amount of sulphur, causing a clinker which adheres and eats the bars of the furnace ; whereas, the latter with a less amount of steam producing power contains hardly any sulphur, but makes a large amount of ash.

As regards the Pictou coal for gas purposes, the following testimonies will be of value. Mr. Alexander Thompson of the Pictou gas works—states the Foord Pit appears to give the best result in gas making, from its large gas content, the high illuminating power of the gas, and the superior coke produced in its carbonization.

The Drummond and the coals of the Old Mines, Dalhousie and Cage pits, appear to stand next. The Stellarite and oil shale of the Acadian Mines, are most valuable for mixing with the coals to increase their illuminating power, but would be of no great value if used alone, for two reasons : because their coke is useless, (being merely a cinder, with a slight per centage of fixed carbon, and therefore useless in heating retorts,) and because the gases produced in carbonizing them are too carbonaceous for use with ordinary burners. Good coke such as the Intercolonial Coal Company coal makes, is not only valuable to the gas manufacturer as a merchantable product, but also in heating the retorts.

Special report of Mr. A. Thompson, on the coal from the Drummond colliery :—

"I have carefully examined the contents of six (6) barrels of coal from the Drummond colliery marked respectively Nos. 1, 2 and 3, with the following results :—

No. 1—	Yields at the rate of	7,000	cubic feet of gas and	32	bushels of coke to the ton.
No. 2—	"	7,500	"	32	" " "
No. 3—	"	8,500	"	36	" " "

"The gas has an illuminating power of 15 candles. The volatile combustible matter is such in amount and character as to promise well in gas-making. The coke is firm and of good quality, well adapted for heating the retorts in gas-making, and can thus take the place of coal for that purpose."

Besides their use as steam and gas producers, several Pictou coals are sold extensively for various purposes, among which may be mentioned, heating iron, blacksmithing and domestic uses. For heavy iron work they are peculiarly adapted, such as making anchors, &c., as they cake so well, thereby keeping in the heat the same as in a furnace.

The cakes of some of the coals have also been, to a certain extent, successfully used in iron smelting and founding. In the Eastern United States the coals are used in forges and rolling mills with good success.

For domestic purposes these coals are well and favourably known, they light easily in the grate, and burn well and long with very little attention, except in some instances in which the contents of the ash is very large.

Those requiring fuller information of this branch of our mineral wealth, would do well to consult Edward Huntley, Esq., F.G.S., "Report on the Coals of Pictou County, Nova Scotia."

We regret that we cannot furnish data of the amount of coal annually exported. The Drummond Colliery raised last year about 55,000 tons, and already up to date (September) this year, has brought forward nearly if not quite the same amount.