

**“A WEE KEEK BACK”**

**AT**

**COAL MINING AND MINERS**

**VOL. VI.**

**ARTICLES EXTRACTED FROM THE LOCAL NEWSPAPERS**

**By**

**JIM CAMPBELL**



[Table of Contents](#)

[LOCAL HIST MK 1](#)

LOCHORE AND CAPLEDRAE CANNEL ..... 1  
COAL COMPANY ..... 6  
COAL STRUCK IN THE NEW MINE. .... 6  
INFLUENCE OF THE ELECTRIC LIGHT ..... 7

ON THE COAL TRADE.....	7
DEATH OF A NATIVE OF LOCHGELLY .....	8
IN AMERICA.....	8
A REMARKABLE AND SUCCESSFUL CAREER.....	8
OLD COAL WORKINGS.....	13
EXTENSIVE MINING OPERATIONS.....	15
AT HILL OF BEATH.....	15
OPENING UP THE DALBEATH COALFIELDS.....	15
TRAGIC DEATH OF MR BRUNTON .....	18
OF THISTLEFORD FARM. ....	18
BODY FOUND IN A PIT OF 110 FATHOMS.....	18
LIFE IN A MODEL LODGING-HOUSE.....	20
A SATURDAY NIGHT VISIT AND SURVEY. ....	20
FIFE COAL COMPANY .....	24
CONTEMPLATED LARGE DEVELOPMENT .....	24
COWDENBEATH.....	25
SANITARY CONDITION OF THE BURGH.....	25
BOWHILL .....	30
THE COLLIERY - ITS EXTENT AND ITS EQUIPMENT .....	30
THE PASSING OF THE OLD TOLL.....	32
THE FIFESHIRE MINER.....	34
THE PITHEAD WORKER.....	37
THE WORK UNDERGROUND - PLEA .....	39

FOR THE SHORTER DAY.....	39
BATHS FOR MINERS.....	43
Proposed Experiment at Aitken Pit.....	43
The Old Conditions of Work and Housing.....	43
BATHS FOR THE AITKEN PIT.....	48
JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS AT .....	49
LASSODIE.....	49
HANDSOME GIFTS TO MR JOHN.....	49
BROWNLIE AND DAUGHTER.....	49
GREATER COWDENBEATH.....	58
IN DAY OF OLD.....	60
DUNFERMLINE, 1791 - 1812.....	60
HOUSING OF MINERS IN FIFESHIRE	
DR. DEWAR ON SANITARY DEFECT.....	62
HOUSING OF THE MINERS .....	67
Fife Coal Company's Experiment.....	67
FAILURE OF THE KELTY BATH SCHEME.....	68
HOUSING OF THE MINERS.....	69
Fife Coal Company's Experiment.....	69
IS COWDENBEATH UNDER POLICED?.....	70
BATHS AT COLLIERIES.....	72
BATHS FOR MINERS.....	74
THE PIT BROW LASSIES.....	78
CONDITIONS OF THEIR WORK.....	78

Compulsory Washing at Collieries .....	81
SIXTY-FIVE YEARS A MINER.	
EARLY REMINISCENCES OF WELLWOOD.....	83
AND DUNFERMLINE .....	83
AS OTHER SEE US .....	87
THE COLLIER AND SPORT.....	87
LOCHORE MEADOWS.....	89
A RECLAMATION SCHEME.....	89
IN TIME OF WAR.....	91
HOW LOCHGELLY IS AFFECTED.....	91
IN TIME OF WAR.....	95
LOCHORE, GLENCRAIG AND CROSSHILL	
IN TIME OF WAR.....	98
COWDENBEATH.....	98
COMMUNISM RESISTED .....	100
Striker's Novel Project for.....	100
Working of Seam.....	100
COMMUNISM OF A KIND.....	101
PROPOSED PIT BATH.....	106
SCHEME OUTLINED FOR .....	106
KINGLASSIE COLLIERY.....	106
KELTY FIFTY YEARS AGO.....	108
CHURCH AS A BLACKSMITH'S SHOP.....	113
BLAIRHALL COLLIERY BATHS	
THE FIRST INSTALLATION IN WEST FIFE.....	114

BLAIRHALL PITHEAD BATHS.....	115
NEW SCHEME OPENED BY SECRETARY .....	115
FOR SCOTLAND. ....	115
LASSODIE COLLIERY WORKERS.....	120
FINDING EMPLOYMENT ELSEWHERE. ....	120
HOUSING OF LASSODIE PEOPLE. ....	121

*LOCHORE AND CAPLEDRAE CANNEL  
COAL COMPANY.*

COAL STRUCK IN THE NEW MINE.

Brighter prospects may now be held out for the shareholders of the above company, as this week coal has been struck in the new mine, a full description of the running of which was given in the *Dunfermline Journal* of August 24th. This mine incline which was started from the surface in 1874, is driven at an angle 45 degrees to the enormous depth of 240 fathoms. It was expected that coal would have been found long ere this, but numerous "faults" have intercepted the men in their downward course, and consequently operations have been much retarded as these "faults" were chiefly composed of whin rock. Two mines have been run a short distance in opposite directions from the bottom of the incline, and gas coal has been found in both, of good quality, and almost two and a half feet in thickness. Of course it is not yet known whether the coal may be got hold good or not, but from the fact that it has been struck on both sides of the incline, we would almost presume that the basin of the field has at last been reached. It is at least to be hoped so, not only for the sake of the shareholders, but for men in the district, for if the works were to be stopped in these dull times they would have a difficulty in finding employment elsewhere. Mr Aitken, the managing director of the company, in piloting the incline through such an uncertain strata has evidently shown great "pluck". Had it not been for his persevering spirit it is just possible operations would have been abandoned ere now. Being mining engineer for the company he has always underwent a good deal of "heckling" at the shareholders meetings when he reported that coal had not been found in the exploring mine. At the next meeting of the shareholders we trust things will be different, and that Mr Aitken will be in a position to present a favourable report. He is ably assisted in conducting the operations by Mr Ferguson, manager of works,

*The Dunfermline Journal.*  
*November 16, 1878.*

*INFLUENCE OF THE ELECTRIC LIGHT  
ON THE COAL TRADE.*

The annual meeting of the Lochore and Capletrae Coal Company was held in the Freemason' Hall, Edinburgh, yesterday week - Mr Henry Aitken, Falkirk, Chairman of the Company, presiding. The Chairman, in moving the adoption of the report, which has already been published, said that they were now in the happy position which they had never been in before with regard to the old mine of having more coal than they were able to draw. In the new mine they had got coal of good quality, and some whin interruptions being now fairly away, the Directors had the prospect of getting a fair quantity of coal. At present the coal market was in a very unsatisfactory position, and that, coupled with the difficulties in money matters, had reduced the price of coal very considerably. At the present time people who had coal did not care to sell, because they were not very sure of getting their money. But these disturbances would not last much longer, and before long matters would take a turn, and they would be in a much better position than at present.

One disturbing influence had been the electric light. He had made himself familiar with all that had been published on the subject, and, so far as he had been able to judge, they need not fear that it would injure them to any extent, and he was one of those who thought it would prove an advantage in this way, that it would make people make better gas, and to make better gas they would need better coal, and as they had good coal he thought it would cause a demand for first-class cannel's. The electric light would work itself into certain positions where there was large traffic in public streets, and also perhaps into railway stations and factories. He did not think it would ever very materially injure the gas manufacturers, and if they were to believe those who had studied it from a professional point of view - doctors and oculists - they seemed to be of one opinion, and that was that it would be a most injurious thing for the eyes. Mr Samuel L. Mason seconded the motion, which was, after some discussion, agreed to.

*The Dunfermline Journal  
December 7, 1878.*

*DEATH OF A NATIVE OF LOCHGELLY  
IN AMERICA.*

A REMARKABLE AND SUCCESSFUL CAREER.

The death is announced of Mr Henry Chisolm, a native of Lochgelly, and one of the most successful ironfounders in Cleveland, Canada. He was born at Lochgelly, April 22nd, 1822, where he also received his education, and served his apprenticeship as a joiner. Before leaving Scotland for the land of his adoption, he married Miss Jean Allan, of Dunfermline. The *Cleveland Leader* of Tuesday May 10th, 1881, gives the following graphic account of his career: -

HIS DEATH.

Henry Chisolm is dead. He passed away peacefully, without the slightest struggle, at 5.23 o'clock last evening. This will be sad news to thousands of men who have been associated with him in active business. Many of these thousands have, through long years, been in shops and mills kept busy by his active brain and indomitable energy, through good times and hard times alike. In hundreds of humble cottages he was known as a fellow labourer and looked to as a friend, generous and honourable under all circumstances. The story of his life it is hard to write. But it can be gathered in the nooks and corners of his great shops, where tears find their way down begrimed faces and are brushed off by horny hands, grown boney and hard willingly in his employ. Scarcely had Henry Chisolm breathed his last before the news flew to the great works in the Eighteenth Ward, where thousands of men were at work in the mills of his Company. From every department deputations filed into the office, and with quivering lips inquired what was to be done.

“The men can't work; they feel so bad the works will have to shut down.” said the deputations. The superintendent said that probably the works would shut down the day of the funeral. “There is no use,” said the old men who have grown grey in the service, “The men are quitting now and going home all broke up.”

This was a literal fact; and after asking the men to run till twelve o'clock the superintendent hurried to the city for a hasty consultation with the officers of the company. After reporting the facts to the officers of the company an order was issued closing the mills from 12 o'clock last night until after the funeral. Full five thousand ironworkers, on their own demand, went to their homes feeling that they had lost a tried and true friend and fellow worker.

*“A Wee Keek Back”*



This circumstance tells the story of Henry Chisholm's life. The details of his long successful business career will be given and instances of devotion and respect, much like the above, might be multiplied to show what a truly noble and good man has gone.

The disease of which he died was cerebral hyperaemia, a phase of congestion of the brain. He was attacked in New York some six weeks ago. He was a man of iron constitution, but his friends have been urging him to withdraw from active work for several years past, and he was in a measure preparing to do so. He was in New York for a brief rest when the attack came. There he was under treatment for several days and returned home somewhat better. He again took hold of his business, fixing matters to leave for Europe in June, having engaged his passage and contemplating a long season of travel and recreation. About a week after he reached home the attack upon his brain was repeated, and for a number of days he was watched very anxiously by his physicians and friends. From this attack he recovered enough to be about again, as he thought, and again resumed his work. His great energy and habits of business would not permit him to heed the terrible warning, and a few days later came another attack, dethroning his reason and placing his life in great danger. He was unconscious for twenty hours, and when reason reasserted itself he was very low, but hopes of recovery were entertained. His condition was brought to a recuperating point, but his brain refused to act, and a relapse followed. A number of times he rallied slightly in this way, with the same results, until he relapsed into unconsciousness and remained. In this way he lay for nearly sixty hours, when he peacefully and quietly dropped away.

Just before his last relapse into unconsciousness several of his old bosses from the mills, whom he had called by name during his illness, came into to see him. Among them were Messrs Hayes, Walker, Martin, Garrett and Howell. The scene was a very sad one as he looked them over and they took their leave. They all realised the strength of the ties welded by long years of association and mutual labour, and that soon they would be broken. The relations, which have always existed, between Mr Chisolm and the great army of men he has been mainly instrumental in giving employment to have been of the most amicable kind. In all his works there never has originated an organised strike and the men have always known that they were sure of as good wages as paid anywhere, he being always guided by the best prices elsewhere. They relate several instances when the men have notified him that employers elsewhere have been paying higher wages, and after ascertaining the fact Mr Chisolm caused it to be figured up the back pay due his men, from the time the advance was made elsewhere, and the next pay-day every man was sure to receive it. At one time, a full months pay extra was paid the men in this way. It is not surprising that such principles of exact justice should win men, or cause to be made the superior iron and steel for which his works have always been noted. Around these vast works in a quarter of the century that has seen them always busy there has gathered a great number of old and infirm employees, who, in younger years, were faithful men. They have outgrown their usefulness, but not their necessity for food and clothing, and in their comfortable sinecures or as a friend of Henry Chisolm they have been cared for and their homes made comfortable and happy. He has always been a

constant but unostentatious giver. The Industrial School, The Retreat, the Orphan Asylum, the Bethel, both City Hospitals, the Little Sisters, Granville College, Rochester University, all know of his generosity. In giving he has apparently had no purpose but to remain unknown and to help the needy. His sudden and unexpected death has doubtless interfered greatly with his purpose to do much additional good, but his whole life has been full of generous acts as attested in the esteem in which he was held by those who knew him best - his employees. In 1876 he went to Europe and the men quit work at the mills and followed the train for several miles in their affectionate leave-taking. He then visited his old home in Scotland, where his aged mother lived. About three months ago she preceded him in her flight to the undiscovered country.

Henry Chisolm leaves five children and ten grandchildren; one brother, William Chisolm, of this city, a sister, Mrs Barron, a widow, residing in the Eighteenth ward.

#### SKETCH OF HIS CAREER.

Henry Chisolm was born at Lochgelly, Fifeshire, Scotland, April 22, 1822. At ten years old he lost his father, Stewart Chisolm, a mining contractor. After receiving a good elementary education in the schools of his native place, at twelve years old he was apprenticed to a carpenter and joiner for five years. Having completed his apprenticeship, he removed to Glasgow, where he remained working at his trade until 20 years old. At that age he emigrated to Canada, and worked at the same trade at Montreal for about seven years, at first as a journeyman and subsequently in business on his own account. His success was so marked that his establishment became one of the most extensive of its kind in Montreal.

In 1850 he removed to Cleveland, and in company with a Montreal friend, undertook to build a breakwater for the Cleveland and Pittsburg Railroad Company at the lake terminus of their road. This work occupied him about three years, and was carried on under his immediate personal superintendence. So satisfactory was it on its completion numerous other contracts of similar character were made, and for some time after he was fully kept employed, contracting for and constructing piers and docks along the lake front of Cleveland.

In 1857, foreseeing the importance of this city as a manufacturing point, he turned his attention to working in iron. At that time very little in that direction had been done in Cleveland or its vicinity, and manufacturing was yet in its infancy. Forming a partnership under the name of Chisolm, Jones & Co., a rolling mill was erected for the purpose of making railroad iron. In a short time the name of the firm was changed to Stone, Chisolm, & Jones. The capacity of the mill at that time was about fifty tons a day, to produce which about 150 men were employed. Part of the work of the mill was the re-rolling of old rails, the material for new rails being iron from the ores of Lake Superior, reaching Cleveland by the lakes. In 1859 an important addition to the works was made in the erection of a blast furnace in what is now the Eighteenth ward mill. This was the first

built in this part of Ohio. In the year following another furnace was erected and additions made to the rolling mill, for the purpose of manufacturing all kinds of merchant iron as well as rails. His next step was to build a rolling mill in Chicago, and two blast furnaces in Indiana, with which to partially supply the Chicago works with pig iron, manufactured like the pig iron of the Cleveland furnaces, from Lake Superior and Missouri ores. The Chicago mill was placed in charge of his eldest son, William, as general manager. In 1864 the firm of Stone, Chisolm & Jones, organised the Cleveland Rolling Mill Company, into which the partnership merged, and the Lake Shore Rolling Mill was added to the property by purchase. In 1865 the company constructed the second Bessemer steel works in the United States, one of the most perfect and successful establishments of the kind in existence. Commencing with a capacity of twenty thousand tons annually, the demands upon it required its enlargement until it had a capacity of over one hundred thousand tons of steel yearly, giving employment to some fifteen hundred men, and turning out from six to eight million dollars worth of steel each year. The steel rails from this manufactory are shipped to all parts of the country, and the demand is continuous. But rails do not form the only product of the Bessemer works; at least thirty-five thousand tons of other classes of steel, such as tire, merchant, and spring steel were made. A wire mill was also added, which turned out from twenty to twenty-five thousand tons of steel wire annually, from the coarsest size to the finest hair. All shapes of steel forgings are also produced at the Bessemer works.

The furnaces are supplied with ore from the Company's own mines in Lake Superior, where about two hundred and fifty men are kept in steady employment. The value of the products of different establishments of the Company in Cleveland is between twelve and fifteen million dollars annually.

In 1871 he organised the Union Rolling Mill Company of Chicago (independent of the Cleveland Rolling Mill Company), which did a business of about two million five hundred thousand dollars. In connection with his Chicago partners, he also erected a rolling mill at Decatur, Illinois. The business of all these concerns aggregate about ten million dollars yearly, and give employment directly to 2500 men. The immense concerns were all the outgrowth of the small concern established in Cleveland in 1857.

Perhaps no achievement in the iron business of the United States has ever paralleled this enormous growth from such small beginnings in so short a space of time. When he landed in Montreal in 1842, he had not a dollar, but he commenced the Iron manufactory in 1857 with 25,000 dollars saved from his earnings as a tradesman and contractor, and in less than eighteen years the business which he commenced with that modest capital came to represent an investment of 10,000,000 dollars. No panics materially affected the business of these great concerns, and from the heavy amount of capital controlled, they were able to give material aid to many of the large and small railroad companies of the country, carrying them over periods of depression and helping them out of their difficulties when money was not easy to obtain.

Henry Chisolm knew no such word as fail. In political affairs he took no part, except to perform his duties as a good citizen. To every institution or enterprise of a benevolent character he contributed liberally, and those engaged in charitable or philanthropic works learned to put assurance in his sympathy and support. Although absorbed in the cares of his extensive business he did not make that the only purpose of his life, but recognised the necessity of something higher and better than money making. He looked after the interests of those in his employ with a consideration that secured their confidence and esteem, and his kindly manner won their personal friendship for the man as well as respect for the employer. He was a trustee or director of four of the charitable institutions of this city. For twenty years he was an active member of the Second Baptist Church of Cleveland, and for a long time was one of its trustees and deacons. He was a heavy stockholder in several banking and manufacturing institutions. He was married before he left Scotland, to Miss Jean Allen, of Dunfermline, Fifeshire. The oldest son, William, has many of the qualities of his father. He was for seventeen years vice president and general manager of the Union Rolling Mill Company at Chicago. When that concern was sold out he came here last year to relieve his father of part of his cares, and is now vice president and director of the Cleveland Rolling Mill Company. Stewart H, is the purchasing agent of the mills here, and William B., the youngest son, is superintendent and general manager of the works in the Eighteenth ward. The two daughters are Mrs A.T. Osborne, and Mrs C.B. Beach, and reside here.

*The Dunfermline Journal,*  
*May 28, 1881.*

*OLD COAL WORKINGS.*

In the course of digging the foundations for the railway bridge over the Dreel, near Anstruther, the workmen mad a curious discovery in the shape of the coal workings by the Dutch nigh two hundred years ago. The bed of coal, which is about eighteen inches thick, crops out at the edge of the burn, and is the same which appears to have been worked over an area of about two hundred acres or more between the rivulet and the sea towards the Billaikness, where the mine continues to draw off water from a section of the works to this day. It was this Dutch company which built the rude pier at the West Haven, and which, after exhausting the coal-field of West Anst'er, is said to have had a lease under the old Laird of Fordell, by which they worked the far-famed "Mynheer Seam", and to have erected the harbour at St David's to ship the coals to Holland, as they had done before in the East Fife.

*The Dunfermline Journal,  
August 20, 1881.*

*OPENING OF A NEW HALL.*

A new public hall has just been built by Mr Brunton, hotelkeeper, near to the Post Office. The hall forms the upper flat of a range of buildings, is 60ft by 28ft., and is seated to accommodate 600 people. The room is airy and well lighted, and ample accommodation is provided by way of private rooms. The access is also all that could be desired. The total cost of the building is two thousand pounds. Last night the hall was formally opened with a grand concert. Mr H. Mungall, managing partner of the Cowdenbeath Coal Company, occupied the Chair, and there was a large attendance. The concert was in the hands of Messrs John and William Ireland, and they presented an excellent programme of Scottish music. The opening was a thorough success.

*The Dunfermline Journal,  
November 24, 1883.*

*EXTENSIVE MINING OPERATIONS  
AT HILL OF BEATH.*

OPENING UP THE DALBEATH COALFIELDS.

There is no County in Scotland, which is richer in minerals than the good old “Kingdom” of Fife. As early as the 13th century collieries were worked in the neighbourhood of Dunfermline, and with such enterprise did the men and women of Fifeshire and other parts of Scotland bring the hidden treasures to the surface that in 1656 a scare arose that the coalfields were all but exhausted, and an Act was passed prohibiting the export of coal.

The prohibition was withdrawn in 1672, and from that date Fifeshire has continued to pour a very large portion, when the area and number of inhabitants are considered, of coals into the export markets. As with other counties in England and Scotland, time has not passed in vain over the mode of coal-getting in the county of Fife. Old and antiquated institutions have been relegated to the cool shades of oblivion at every colliery, and every day one hears of even very advanced methods being superseded by still more later inventions.

A most noteworthy example of the tendencies of the age is presently to be seen at Hill of Beath Colliery. Mr Adams recently obtained a lease of Dalbeath minerals from Mr Dalgleish of Dalbeath, and has set about opening up the new field on a scale which bids fair to rival anything in Scotland.

It is now some 27 years since the late Mr Ord Adams pitched his tent in Fifeshire, and without ceremony, and certainly without fuss, he commenced sinking operations a little to the east of the Hill of Beath - a hill which is honoured with a place in Covenanting history. As was to be expected, the shaft had not got far down the strata when a deluge of water came down from the “junior mountain”. The water difficulty was got over by powerful machinery, and such a hold of coal was got that operations have been carried on on a pretty extensive scale for the long period of 25 years. The seams struck from time to time have been numerous, and of the finest quality. Now and again formidable difficulties arose only to be surmounted by the late Mr Adams. A pit, which has done duty for at least 25 years, must have extended its operations to a great distance in every direction from the shaft, and little surprise will be created at the fact that Mr David Adams should have resolved on taking hold of the Dalbeath coalfield by means of a new shaft.

The site of the new operations is one of the most romantic which could have been chosen in the district. From the railway which connects the brickwork and the other pits with the main railway, a single line has been run to the pit mouth almost a dead level, but on each

side and immediately to the north of the works a series of trappean rocks rise to a considerable height. Into this veritable horse-shoe the whole works are being planted - a situation which gives the proprietors the advantage of building the various structures upon the solid rock.

The sinking of the shaft has not yet been proceeded with to any depth, but such progress has been made with the machinery and head gearing as to give one an idea of the nature of the undertaking. The first thing which attracts the attention of the visitor is the huge Wigan frame which has been erected, and which carries at a great height no fewer than four pulley wheels - each measuring 13 feet in diameter. This means that four cages are to be swinging in the shaft at one and the same time - a circumstance which indicates that the operations bid fair to be the most extensive, for one pit, in the county of Fife. At no colliery in Fife, and at few, if any, in Scotland has a shaft been sunk to admit a double set of cages being brought into operation.

The shaft is 25 feet by 10 feet, and it will be divided by a strong wooden partition, so that practically there will be two pits. Judging from the works of the old pit, which extended to within a short distance of the new shaft, it is expected that the Dunfermline Splint or lowest workable seam of coal will be struck at a depth of about 180 fathoms. Immediately above this seam, however, lie the "Five Feet," the "Lochgelly Splint," the "Fourteen Feet" - all well known seams in Fifeshire, ranging from three and a half to six feet in thickness, and of excellent quality - and quite a host of thinner seams which may be tackled after the more profitable seams have been exhausted. To the rise Mr Adams anticipates that he will have at least 150 acres of the various seams referred to, and to the North or dip a new field will be reached by cross-cutting one of the main hitches or dykes of the district. The coalfield to the North of the hitch is of considerable extent, at least 200 acres, and, as in the south, the seams are known to be of the finest quality.

To pierce the strata to the depth of 160 or 180 fathoms in the vicinity of so many hills means that the shaft will form a gathering pond for a great flow of water, and Mr Adams is making ample provision for coping with the supply. A direct working compound pumping engine is being erected on the east side of the shaft. The two cylinders respectively measure 84 inches in diameter and 54 inches, and its transverse beam is a feature which will doubtless meet all the wants of the case. The engine will have a 13 feet stroke. The plunger will measure some 24 inches in diameter, and the pipes at least 21 inches. It is computed that should it be found necessary, this ponderous pump will be capable of raising over a ton of water to the surface every stroke. A powerful crab is being fitted up as an auxiliary to the engine - a machine by which all the necessary work connected with the pumps will be carried out. In a shaft with such ponderous fittings it will be readily understood that a great amount of heavy work will fall to be performed. That ample provision is being made for the heavy work will be apparent, however, when it is stated that the crab is guaranteed to lift 30 tons, and a rope whose breaking strain will reach this high standard will, therefore, be placed on the drum. The engine is being covered in by a brick house which will have some little architectural features about it.



The winding house is all but erected, and judging from any point of view, it is a substantial building. The visitor, however, has little time for inspecting the outside walls; to an inspection of the internal fittings he naturally sets his face without delay. The head-gearing already referred to prepares one for expecting great things in every department, and certainly the two pairs of coupled engines which have been erected within the one structure in every respect meet the highest anticipation. The pair of engines which will do duty in No 1 shaft have 28 inch cylinders, and a drum measuring 14 feet in diameter, and the pair for No 2 shaft have 24 inch cylinders, and a drum which measures 12 feet. The engines are what are known as the ordinary link motion, and the pair for No 1 shaft will be capable of winding at least 600 tons of coals per day of eight hours at a depth of 180 fathoms; while on No 2 the output should reach 400 to 500 tons. From this it will be observed that, if the coals are brought into the bottom of the shaft, there will be ample facilities for raising them to the surface. At Earnock Colliery, Hamilton, a pair of engines of the same dimensions as on No 1 shaft raises about 1300 tons per day of 13 hours; a fact which indicates that our calculations are under rather than over stated. A donkey engine is situated close to the winding engines. The “donkey” has a 9 inch cylinder, and its connections are to be such as will enable it to pump from the reservoir, from the pit, to the boilers.

Meantime the steam to all the engines is to be supplied by four double flued Cornish boilers whose working pressure will be 80 lbs. to the square inch. As the work requires the number of boilers will be added to. The boilers are all fitted with dead safety valves, and in every respect the work is creditable to the enterprising maker, Mr W. Wilson, Lilliebank Works, Glasgow.

The pumping, winding, and other engines, are all being supplied by Messrs Grant, Ritchie & Co., Kilmarnock. This is a firm which in recent years, has taken a capital hold of colliery proprietors in Fife, and in fact throughout Scotland and England, and the fittings they are erecting at Hill of Beath Colliery will assuredly be the means of still furthering their reputations. Messrs Grant, & Ritchie are meantime represented at the works by Mr James Boise.

It would be difficult to estimate the cost of the fittings referred to, but we should not be surprised to learn that the total cost will not be less than then thousand pounds, and ere the coal is reached the capital sunk may not be less than thirty thousand pounds.

The whole operation is being carried on under the immediate superintendence of Mr David Adams. In his enterprising and plucky work he has the assistance of Mr Philips, the manager.

*The Dunfermline Journal,*  
May 21, 1887.

*TRAGIC DEATH OF MR BRUNTON  
OF THISTLEFORD FARM.*

BODY FOUND IN A PIT OF 110 FATHOMS.

General regret was felt in agricultural circles in the Western District of Fifeshire on Monday, when it became noised abroad that the lifeless body of Mr John Brunton, farmer Thistleford, had been found in a fearfully mangled state in the shaft on No 3 Pit, Cowdenbeath Colliery, Cowdenbeath.

It appears that Mr Brunton had not exactly been in his usual state of health for a few days at the close of last week, and at an early hour on Sunday Morning - 6.40 - he left Thistleford Farm in a partially dressed state. He was seen passing through the main street of the village about 7 o'clock. His friends at home, however, took no notice of the early departure. They naturally thought that he had gone out about the farm to attend to ordinary duties connected with the stock. Mr Brunton, however, did not turn up at the farmhouse at the hour anticipated, and in the course of the day his friends became alarmed as to his safety. A search, without success, was made about the farm buildings, and in the evening search parties were organised and a complete survey made of the district. Moss Morran and other places, where it was assumed he might have become faint and fallen down, were searched, but no trace of the missing man could be found. Throughout the night some of Mr Brunton's many friends began to fear the worst, and a visit was paid to Lochgelly Loch, where some little dragging was conducted for some time.

A clue to the mystery was not found, however, until between 4 and 5 o'clock on Monday morning. At that hour Messrs Richard Hunter, George Stein, and James Erskine, all inspectors, descended No 3 Pit, Cowdenbeath Colliery, for the purpose of making their usual rounds before work was resumed for the day. The men had just reached the bottom of the shaft when they were horrified to find one of the legs of a man lying in the cage seats. They at once came to the conclusion that the discovery had something to do with the missing man, and having communicated with the people on duty on the pithead, they commenced without delay to make an examination of the shaft and its surroundings.

Meantime the news of the discovery spread like wildfire throughout the village, and the pit-brow was soon surrounded by men, many of whom had turned out with a view to descend the shaft. An hour passed without any further discovery being made, and at this time the people on the pithead had been largely augmented by women and children. After two hours diligent search Messrs Hunter, Wyllie, Andrew Todd, George Stein, and Richard Hunter discovered a body (which turned out to be that of Mr Brunton, and from which a leg had been wrenched) in the entrance to the Mynheer seam, some 35 fathoms from the bottom of the shaft, and 75 from the pit-brow.

The body was at once brought to the surface, and although a good deal mangled was quite recognisable. What accounts for the body having been pitched into the entrance to a seam in the side of the shaft is the fact that it is a common thing to have the cages hanging in mid shaft when operations are suspended. In the descent the probability is that the deceased struck one of the cages, and there the poor man lost one of his legs, and was pitched into the abandoned workings.

How Mr Brunton got into the pit is a matter of conjecture. The pit is one of the upcast shafts of the colliery, and the mouth of the shaft is covered over with flat doors which are raised up and down as the cages come to the surface. At the lower scaffold, at the same level as the wagon road, entrance can only be obtained to the shaft by opening a heavy door which in every connection is so close for the air, as is possible to make erections of the kind.

Mr Brunton was only 46 years of age. He was married. Up till within three years ago he carried on business as a hotel keeper in addition to farming. The Brunton's have been associated with the farm of Thistleford, and the village of Cowdenbeath, for about half a century. Deceased was a most successful breeder of Clydesdale horses, and for many years was a most successful exhibitor at the Western District of Fife Agricultural Society's Shows. He was a Road Trustee for Dunfermline district.

Mr Brunton's remains were followed to their last resting place by a large circle of friends.

*The Dunfermline Journal,*  
*May 28, 1887.*

*LIFE IN A MODEL LODGING-HOUSE.*

---

A SATURDAY NIGHT VISIT AND SURVEY.

*Life is all a variorum,  
We regard not how it goes;  
Let them cant about decorum  
Who have characters to lose.*

So sang Burns. And the words appropriately describe the condition of things as they exist in a model lodging-house on Saturday evening, when ninety per cent. of the inmates are in the cheerful reckless condition so aptly described by Burns. Then "life is all a variorum;" it is seen through the magnifying glamour of alcohol, as Burns "Jolly Beggars" saw it. Cares are thrown to the four winds, pains are forgotten, and the vision is rosily optimistic - all under the magic but deceitful spell of a stomach full of drink.

The inmates of a common lodging-house are a varied lot. Men with a University education may be found side by side with navvies who cant spell their names, and minister, lawyers, bricklayers, joiners, masons, printers, many others, all combine in a common company.

Need For Lodging-Houses.

No one can doubt the utility of a common lodging-house. The majority of its inmates are either people with whom life has been a failure through their own shortcomings or people who have never known a superior environment. Daily the law of trespass becomes more rigidly enforced, and men found sleeping at pits, in outhouses, or on stairs, or in farmyards are smartly brought before the bench. And rightly so, often as much for their own safety as for the safety of the property they are taking the use of. Then, on the other hand, charity may be ever so good, but it is looking for an abnormal share of it to ask respectable people to give these wayfarers a night's accommodation in their private house. The possibility of what might be left behind is too dire for the average person to contemplate. These things being kept in mind, then - on the one hand the interference of the law as to trespass, and on the other the absolute impossibility of the tramp class finding shelter other than in houses specifically set apart for them - it will at once be conceded that common lodging-houses, if they may be termed a necessary evil, serve a highly useful purpose in society.

An Up To Date Shelter.

The Dunfermline Model Lodging-House Company's establishment at the corner of Bruce Street and Chapel Street is the largest and most up to date shelter of the kind in the city, and a decided improvement on the hovels that once were. A glimpse of life as seen in it on Saturday evening and Sunday is rather interesting, if it has also a painful aspect.

*"A Wee Keek Back"*

Through the kindness of Mr Mackay, the superintendent, a representative of the "Express" and the "Journal" was privileged to witness the place as it presents itself on Saturday evening. On Saturday last there were no fewer than 156 sleepers in the house. That is a large number of men to be under the control of one man, especially when the condition of most of them is remembered. It is not to be wondered at that police cases arise in the establishment; the wonder rather is that there are not more. The superintendent may be as kindle as he chooses - and Mr Mackay is kindly disposed to those who behave themselves - but he must, above all things else, be firm, if he wishes to retain his position. All rowdiness must be put down with a high hand, else pandemonium must inevitably ensue. Many a time has some innocent soul to suffer for the sake of maintaining the order of the house.

#### At The Pay Box.

Standing at the pay-box between half past nine and half past ten o'clock on Saturday evening, the writer saw the stream of humanity flowing in and out continuously. Men are there in all degrees of intoxication - from being merely garrulous to helplessly oblivious. Up and down they go - laughing, bantering, swearing, singing. The man who has been in the beer shop the whole of the evening is followed by him who, footsore and weary, has had a hard pegging to reach the place in time for a bed. Next may come a man who has lost the check for his bed, which he had received hours before. Then he forgets the name he had given, and asserts that he never gave it. He has already paid, he says, and won't pay again. Equally determined, the superintendent will not allow him inside without a ticket. So differences arise at a time of night when the man in charge has his hands full. There is no time to waste. The lodger must either quit or the police are called in. Thus police cases arise. Then, again, a man may attempt to sneak past when there is a rush. On being discovered he usually makes a hastier exit than entrance. Or here is an undesirable - a well-known thief, he may be, or an unfailing disturber of the peace. He is detected by the lynx-eyed superintendent, put to the stair-foot, where there generally commences a voluble out pouring of sulphurous language, specially directed against he who has outwitted him. Here is another police case if the officers happen to be in the vicinity.

#### The Savour Of The Kitchen.

After the lodger has paid for his bed - the price of which ranges from 3 1/2d to 5d - according to the privacy which the man may desire - he is handed a metal tablet bearing the number of the bed he is to occupy. That tablet is taken from him by the night warden, and he can either pass right up to the dormitory or go into the kitchen. This apartment presents an animated spectacle on a Saturday evening. All sorts, sizes, and types of men are here - from the great powerful navy to the diminutive hunchback who earns his living principally by his vocal and begging efforts. The odour here is strong, for there are and have been many culinary attempts. The frying pan is the principal cooker, and a dozen men may be seen standing round the hot plate at one time, bringing into eatable

condition all sorts of meat - kippers, haddock, sausages, ham, steak, etc. There are other inmates lying around, some semi, others fully intoxicated. Some vainly endeavour to read while others babble; several have managed to struggle upstairs to fall into a drunken sleep at one of the tables, at the other end of which another may be voraciously devouring the finished product of his cooking. The scene is a rough one, yet there are some large hearted men in the crowd. One who was approached offered to pay the price of a bed for a stranger, who alleged that he was down on his luck. On the other hand, there are some unblushing scoundrels. A stout able-bodied young man when asked how he made his existence, shamelessly said he lived by begging alone. Occasionally a frenzied inmate finds that he has lost some of his belongings. He may be right, for thieving is common in a lodging-house, and he may also be the victim of a misapprehension. A row starts, and the police are summoned. Occasionally too, an over-liquored man seeks a quarrel, and often creates a general melee.

#### To The Dormitories.

Shortly after ten o'clock a Salvation Army officer usually appears, selling the "War Cry". He disposes of a few, perhaps, and the next morning the purchasers swear on finding that they have bought what they believed to be the last edition of an evening paper. To obviate Sunday disturbances thus arising, Mr Mackay has been compelled to keep Army officers from selling the sheet to men when they are drunk. At half-past ten the last bell rings, and there is a general trek for the dormitories. Some of the drunken have to be wakened and helped upstairs; others obstreperous through the liquor, have occasionally to be compelled to go to bed or to leave the building. One party, who had commenced to fry, had to bundle his kippers in a piece of paper; another who had just arrived, asked permission to cook a bite for his supper, but permission could not be granted, and presumably the man went to bed supperless, for the rule must not be infringed. At intervals the police drop in to see that the peace is being kept. When the kitchen is cleared, a visit is usually paid by the officials to the dormitories to ascertain how things go there. In these places the lodgers may be witnessed carefully laying aside their clothes, and quietly secreting their possessions if they have not paid an extra copper for the use of a locker. It often happens that a lodger has no desire to court rest. His tongue wags freely, or he will demonstrate the strength of his vocal organs. These proceedings, of course, cannot be tolerated if the inmates are to have sleep, so there is either an eviction or quietness. There is a certain amount of justification for imposing a heavier tariff for a breach of the peace under such conditions, when the number of persons annoyed are borne in mind. When quietness reigns, the warden sets about his nightly task of cleaning up the kitchen.

#### The Day Of Rest.

*"A Wee Keek Back"*

On Sunday morning there is a different feeling in the air. There is less noise and less talk, although the day is not allowed to pass without some alcoholic refreshment being partaken of by those who had the foresight to furnish themselves with a supply of the "needful". On Sunday the shop, which is under the special care of Mrs Mackay, is well patronised. There all the necessaries of existence may be had at moderate rates. Groceries are usually purchased in small quantities - tea and sugar being procurable even in halfpenny worths. The Sunday dinner is somewhat of a luxury. For the small sum of twopence a lodger may have a large bowl of soup or broth and four or five potatoes. It is wonderful to witness the procession in single file for the luxury. As the throng passes slowly up to the door, one may have again the opportunity of studying the various phases of humanity - from the quiet shabby-genteel young man, with half dirty collar and felt hat, who, evidently new to the life, looks shamefacedly at a stranger, to the hardened tramp who is indifferent to everything but the luxury that is awaiting him.

#### The Ways Of The Wayfarer.

After dinner there is usually more loafing around the kitchen, reading the weekly papers, those desirous of greater quietness may repair to the reading-room downstairs, or others may go outside for a stroll. It may be interesting to know that the use of spoons and knives is charged for at a rate of twopence each. When a lesser tariff was imposed very few of them were returned. The amount of money drawn at the shop in the Dunfermline Company's house reaches the astonishing figure of nine hundred pounds in a single year. And that money is usually drawn in small sums. Nor are the prices of beds high when one remembers the privileges afforded of cooking and cleaning, there being appliances for assisting in the washing of clothes.

Nearly 500 people of such a class are housed in Dunfermline weekly. The life is a rough one. Those who live it may have compensation in cheapness and lack of worry. Yet seldom is it chosen by preference; people are generally driven to it by stress of circumstances. And who knows all the miseries and discomforts that have to be suffered by many of its followers between visits to such establishments, where to those Ishmaelites existence is found in its most luxurious form.

*"West Fife Echo"*  
September 27th, 1905.

## *FIFE COAL COMPANY*

---

### CONTEMPLATED LARGE DEVELOPMENT

---

The Fife Coal Company, which is responsible for about half the output of coal in the county, are about to embark on a more extensive undertaking than any which they have hitherto faced. Negotiations have been concluded whereby the Company have acquired the right to work the minerals on the estates of Capledrae, Redwells, Pitkinnie, and Inchdairnie. Formerly the right of working the minerals belonged to a syndicate whose efforts to float a company to develop the field had not met with the success anticipated. The purchase means a field of between 2000 and 3000 acres, almost equal to the coalfields of Cowdenbeath and Kelty combined. The Messrs Thomson, mineral borers, Dunfermline, had been testing the field for the syndicate, and their bores have proved the existence of all the well-known Fife seams. So far the tests are incomplete, and the Messrs Thomson have been commissioned by the Company to put down many more bores. At the points where the seams have been pierced the coal is not quite so thick as in the corresponding seams of Cowdenbeath and district. Moreover, they are at a much greater depth, some of them have been found as far down as 450 fathoms. To work coal successfully at such depths means the sinking of pits, each of which will cost three hundred thousand pounds. This will mean an enormous outlay of capital, and before determining the number or location of their pits, the Company intend to know the best and worst of the field. The development of the field, which cannot be accomplished before the expiry of several years, will mean a very great addition to the output of the county. Meantime the Company feel that, although their resources are very extensive, they have their hands full, and no development on the Torrie estate, of which they had a trial lease, may be contemplated for some years to come.

*“West Fife Echo”  
November 29, 1905*

*“A Wee Keek Back”*



*COWDENBEATH.*

## SANITARY CONDITION OF THE BURGH.

At the monthly meeting of the Town Council, the following report was read: -

BY THE MEDICAL OFFICER.

Woodside House,  
Cowdenbeath,  
20th January, 1906.

Gentlemen, - I respectfully beg to submit my report on the sanitary condition and the public health of the burgh for the year 1905, and I am again pleased to say a great change for the better has taken place.

In my report for the previous year I made mention how privies were being displaced by water closets, only one or two streets remaining, (Arthur Place and Arthur Street) where privies still existed; these have now been removed, and practically all over the burgh there is the one system of water closets. Only those familiar with the old state of matters, when there were only broken -down, ill-kept privies, can appreciate this great improvement, but in this respect it may serve a useful purpose to recall and quote from a special report by Sir Henry Littlejohn of ten years ago. In April 1895 Sir Henry described the sanitary state as being very bad, and in some places - while apologising for the word - he said, "It was simply awful." The reason for this special report was the constant recurrence of typhoid fever, and in those days we were never free from this disease. We rarely have it now, and it has disappeared as the privies have been removed. In that year, which was a type of what was usual in those days, there were notified: Croup, 5 cases; erysipelas, 9 cases; scarlet fever, 51 cases; typhoid fever, 58 cases; and puerperal fever, 3 cases, giving a total of 126 cases for the year. The population now is nearly double what it was then, and yet we have only a quarter of the infectious disease, and the contrast of typhoid fever is as 58 to 2; besides the infectious diseases we now have are not nearly so virulent nor so fatal as they were under the old surroundings.

The introduction of our new sanitary system may have been costly, but when we appreciate the saving of life and freedom from infectious disease it cannot be other than a pleasure to know we have improved. In physical aspect Cowdenbeath does not look well, but in those days the looks were not the worst of it - now, happily, they are; and while Sir Henry Littlejohn might ten years ago fitly describe our sanitary conditions as deplorable, I think we may now be fitly congratulated on having introduced a system of drainage and sewage purification that place us in the front rank of sanitary equipment.

Our new drainage and septic tank purification works are now in operation. The drainage scheme was completed last year and is working well. The septic tank part of the system only came into operation in October last; it seems to work well, but it is as yet too soon to expect the bacteria to entirely purify the effluent. The character of the effluent is being regularly examined, and will be reported on later.

Another indirect, though great benefit conferred on the town by the removal of the privies is the setting free of large, open spaces; formerly these open spaces were dangerous fever beds, now they apparently contain nothing worse than at times stagnant surface water. These open spaces are very valuable from a public health point of view, and a very little expenditure would suffice to have them so levelled up that surface water would not collect, and a full public health value got from them.

During the autumn there was a great scarcity of water, and the town supply had to be largely supplemented by water pumped from one of Fife Coal Company's pits. This water was hard but wholesome. The scarcity was chiefly accounted for by the dry summer, but it was also due to insufficient storage. The reservoir has a capacity of 35 million gallons, supplying a population of about 15,000, and there is a daily consumption of 490,000 gallons, giving a supply of slightly over 35 gallons per head of population, and a storage capacity equal to about two months. Now, the storage capacity should be at least equal to three months, and I would recommend that this defect be remedied.

In successive reports I have complained of the pollution of the streams, of which there are three. The streams to the north and south of the burgh are seriously polluted by sewage from houses outside the burgh boundaries; in the hotter months this pollution is a grave nuisance, and some arrangement should be made with the county authorities to overcome this; and then the bed of the stream should be cleaned.

The stream in the centre of the burgh is polluted by sewage from houses in Moss-side Road, the sewage passing in a ditch through a field to the stream. This, I am informed, is being corrected by the sewage being passed into one of the drains. This stream also requires cleaning.

I made two general and several partial inspections of the burgh, and beyond what is above stated there is nothing requiring special mention.

I was not required to grant any certificate nor to give advice regarding any offensive trade.

The bakehouses, three in number, are clean and in a satisfactory state.

There are two laundries, and they are clean, well ventilated, having the necessary air space and the requisite sanitary requirements.

I inspected all the workshops and workplaces, thirty-six in number, and found them all satisfactory in respect of air space, ventilation, and sanitary requirements.

The model lodging-house is clean, well kept, and having a bed for each occupant.

The community is entirely a mining one, the houses being chiefly two-roomed, and those of more recent construction are an improvement on those of older standing.

I was directed by the Local Government Board to inspect and report on the house occupied by Mr Philip Gender Levy, High Street, Cowdenbeath, as to it being dilapidated, uninhabitable and a nuisance, and reported that while the house was not good, it was habitable and not a nuisance under the Act, and in view of its early demolition - plans for a new house having been passed by the local authority - it did not seem advisable to take further action.

I have repeatedly inspected the Slaughter-House, and each time found it clean and satisfactory; it is very well kept indeed.

Cases of infectious diseases are removed to the Infectious Diseases Hospital, Dunfermline, in the ambulance wagon, attached to the hospital. We have no house of reception, and to this the attention of the local authority has been repeatedly directed. The furnishing, maintenance, and administration of this hospital are in every way satisfactory.

So soon as a case of infectious disease is removed or recovered the walls are sprayed with formaline solution, the house is fumigated, and bed and body linen steeped in disinfectant solution and then washed with carbolic soap. In smallpox the bed and body linen are burned. All infectious cases are either isolated or removed to the Infectious Diseases Hospital, the case being notified to the headmaster of the public school, and no child from that house is allowed to attend school until certificated free from infection. These arrangements have worked well, and we have been free from spread of infectious disease.

The amount of infectious diseases has been small, and of a mild type, with nothing specially to note in its distribution. During the year there were notified 32 cases of infectious disease as compared with 31 for the previous year: - Diphtheria, 3; Croup, 1; Erysipelas, 9; Typhoid fever, 2; Scarlet fever, 17.

Appended is a mortality table showing the cause of deaths at the various ages, the total number of deaths for the year was 130, as compared with 126 for the previous year, and the death rate-per 1000 births is 146.551 as compared with 140.625. -

I am, sirs,  
Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM CRAIG, M.D.

The mortality table referred to shows deaths to have taken place at the following ages: -

1 year and under	50
1 year and under 5 years	20
5 years and under 15 years	8
15 years and under 25 years	12
25 years and under 60 years	20
60 years and upwards	20

BY THE SANITARY INSPECTOR.

Natal Place, Cowdenbeath  
25th January, 1906.

Gentlemen, - I respectfully beg to submit my annual report on the sanitary condition of the burgh of Cowdenbeath during the year ending 31st January, 1906.

During the year the general sanitary condition of the burgh has been fairly satisfactory. All parts of the burgh were regularly visited, and a number of improvements have been made during the year. The removal of ash-pits and privies at Foulford Road, Union Street, Bridge Street, Thistle Street, Arthur Street, and Arthur Place, and water closets erected in their place, with key and numbered, will be a great benefit to the inhabitants at the aforementioned places. There are six houses at the west end of Foulford Street belonging to David Skelding, the sanitary arrangements for said houses consist of an ash-pit and two privies; water closets should be erected for these houses. Fife Coal Company, Ltd., have two houses at the south end of Park Avenue, the sanitary arrangements for said houses consist of an ash-pit and two privies; a water closet should be erected for said houses.

Since the Town Council took the cleaning of the burgh into their own hands there is a great improvement. The new drainage scheme is completed and it appears to be working satisfactory.

The town's water supply during the months of August, September and October in common with many other towns were rather short, and a temporary supply had to be got

from Dalbeath pit. The water was rather hard but when mixed with the reservoir water it was considerably improved for all domestic purposes. In the other months of the year the supply was abundant, which would go to show that more reservoir accommodation is required to tide us over a dry season. I am glad to hear the Town Council are considering the question of an augmented water supply.

I have made twelve general inspections during the year, and two special inspections accompanied by the Medical Officer of Health.

The sanitary conditions of the public schools, factories and workshops within the burgh are good with the exception of the Catholic School, the drains in the conveniences are in bad order.

I visited the Slaughter House daily, and it continues to be kept in a proper sanitary condition.

There is no burial-ground within the Burgh of Cowdenbeath.

I have visited and inspected the dairies within the burgh quarterly and have always found them clean, drains in good order, and a good supply of water. I have visited and inspected the common lodging-house and always found it to comply with the rules and regulations.

Three persons were convicted of causing a nuisance under the Burgh Police (Scotland) Act, 1892.

The adoption of bye-laws with reference to pig-sty's, and other bye-laws adopted by the Town Council have been attended to. Four persons were convicted for a contravention of the cleansing bye-laws.

With regard to Infectious Diseases Notification Act, 1897, there have been notified to me during the year 32 cases as against 31 the previous year. The cases notified were; Diphtheria, 3; erysipelas, 9; scarlet fever, 17; typhoid fever, 2; croup, 1. I conveyed 16 patients to hospital, 14 suffering from scarlet fever, and two from typhoid fever; 32 houses and 32 sets of bedding etc., were disinfected after removal or recovery of the patients.

Your obedient servant

JAMES FINDLAY.

*“West Fife Echo”  
February 14, 1906*

## *BOWHILL*

### THE COLLIERY - ITS EXTENT AND ITS EQUIPMENT

---

One of the newest collieries in the West of Fife, Bowhill Colliery, belonging to the Bowhill Coal Company, Fife, Ltd., is second to none as regards its producing capacity and up-to-date appliances for the extraction of its mineral wealth. The district is exceptionally rich in seams of coal, and at these being tapped, the daily output is ever on the increase. About 2500 tons are extracted every day, and with improved systems of haulage, it is hoped that this total will soon be largely exceeded. In 1895 the first sods of the pit were cut, and thus one can understand from its present state the nature of the undertaking that has been accomplished. Four seams of coal have been found at varying levels: -

	Depth	Thickness
Jubilee	152 fathoms	5 ft.
Lochgelly Splint	170 fathoms	4 ft. 10 ins.
Five Feet	217 fathoms	4 ft.
Dunfermline Splint	220 fathoms	3 ft. 9 ins.

The Fife Feet seam is more valuable than the others, as from it comes a particularly valuable class of coal, suitable for navigation purposes. The size and value of the coalfield can be appreciated when it is stated that it has an extent of four square miles, and that the Lochgelly Splint dook has been run more than 1000 yards through clean coal, while the rise workings are run to a distance of 400 yards. During sixteen of the twenty-four hours coals are brought to the surface the rest of the time being given over to the brushers or reddsmen, whose duty it is to rip down the roofs of the roads at the coal faces in order to give sufficient height for the hutches. Alterations and extensions are being rapidly carried forward, and with the army of pithead workers thus enabled to get through their work more expeditiously, a maximum of 3000 tons a day is confidently looked for. The introduction of the electric light has proved of the greatest service, inasmuch as the work can now be carried on as well by night as by day.

#### Electric Power Plant.

The electric power plant consists of a horizontal condensing Robey engine of 500 horse-power by means of cotton ropes. The voltage is 500, on the three-phase system of 50 cycles per second, supplying power for driving coal-cutters, haulages, pumps, and fans. There are three coal-cutters of the Hurd bar kind made by Messrs Mavor & Coulson, Glasgow, one each working in the Five Feet, Lochgelly Splint, and Davie seams. The

haulage along the level in the main dooks are driven by motors of very large power. The pumps situated at the bottom of the dooks and the pit bottom are of the largest design and are capable of dealing with a large quantity of water. From the alternator, the current is distributed through the underground workings by heavily armoured three-core cables, fixed in the most approved fashion to prevent accidents.

#### Screening Plant.

The screening plant consists of four bars and one plate coal picking tables, with adjustable ends for saving the breakage of coal. When the coal comes up the pit it is carefully weighed in the interest of the Company and checked by a weigher in the interest of the men. From there it is taken to the screen and divided into large and small coal, the large coal passing on to the coal picking tables where any pieces of stone or roof coal are taken out and the good coal goes on direct to the wagon. The small coal that dropped through the first screen passes on to the nut screen where it is divided into different sizes, called churls, trebles, doubles, and singles. Churls are used for kitchen purposes, trebles and doubles for exportation, and singles for steam raising purposes. The duff or residue is used on the premises for the boilers.

A brickwork usually goes in conjunction with a coal mine, and Bowhill Colliery is no exception. Nine thousand bricks are turned out every day at present, and handmade bricks of fireclay and composition are also made in large quantities.

The housing of the employees has been the subject of careful consideration by the directorate, and as a result, rows of houses, built in Streets according to the approved American plan, have been erected and fitted with all modern improvements. Five hundred in all have been put up, but the number is gradually being increased, so much so indeed that Bowhill can claim to be the mushroom city of West Fife.

#### The Old And The New.

These modern innovations present a marked contrast to the old style of working. Coal was first extracted from the sides of glens and hills, the borings being always on the horizontal. Pumping was then impossible, or had not been thought of. The sinking of a shaft demonstrated the need for pumping, and hand pumps were introduced. Later we had the pump driven by water power, which in turn was replaced by the steam engine. Coal mining is of comparatively recent origin, and may be said to have arisen with the advent of the locomotive at the beginning of the last century. Now it is ranked as the greatest of all industries in Fife, and perhaps Scotland.

*“West Fife Echo”  
March 7, 1906.*

*THE PASSING OF THE OLD TOLL.*

The few remaining links in Cowdenbeath that bind it to the past, which remind the present generation that it was not always the busy little town it is now, are slowly but surely passing out of sight. In a few more weeks one of the most outstanding landmarks which more than a hundred years ago was one of the principal buildings, will have been demolished; the old toll house, which, in the words of the Chief Constable, was “a rendezvous for loafers”, will have passed out of existence. Built over 200 years ago, it did duty as a toll house till 28 years ago, when the tolls were abolished. Since then it has served as a cellar, a fishmonger’s shop, a boot shop, a butcher’s shop, and lastly as a barber’s shop. Its present tenant, Mr James Murray, has occupied it for over 16 years. For a long time the place will certainly look strange without Jamie Murray and “his wee barber’s shop at the toll.”

(Tune - “Tam Glen.”)

In a wee little shop at the Fountain,  
 An auld freen’ o’ mine works within;  
 He’s a hert as near big as a mountain,  
 And it seems that he’ll never gang dune.  
 Though his hair’s getting grey with life’s worry,  
 In his hand there is never a shake -  
 He’s a sanny auld chap, Jamie Murray,  
 And as guid as the young yins they make.

Chorus -

He’ll tell you a story, he’ll sing you a sang,  
 And his razors they’re aye in guid trim;  
 You should slip in and see him, it’ll no tak’ him lang  
 Tae wipe a’ the oo aff yer chin.  
 There’s some fascination in his conversation,  
 There’s something about him that’s droll -  
 May he journey through life, free o’ worry and strife,  
 In his wee barber’s shop at the toll.

-Thomas McCue.

How old the toll house is, is a matter of conjuncture, though there seems some truth in the statement that it was built shortly before or after the Great North Road was made. Some interesting details and statements were got through an interview with one of the late toll-keepers, in regard to the old toll days of Cowdenbeath, and some of the experiences and vicissitudes this house has experienced.



One hundred years ago the toll was in charge of a Mrs Webster. Since then the various tax-masters have been Mr J. Stevenson, Mr George Linton, Mr Thomas Carmichael, and Mr H. Birrell. Of these gentlemen Mr Linton was also tax-master for the toll house at Stewart's Arms, and at that one near Crossgates Station. In these days the different toll houses were put up for auction, and so it happened that Mr G. Linton was responsible for three, he of course engaging toll keepers to keep the different places for him. The charges for the different kinds of traffic were fixed by the Government. For carriage, nine-pence was charged for each horse, and merchandise was charged by weight, a steelyard being kept for that purpose, on that site where now stands Dick's Co-operative Institution. Sheep and Cattle were charged at so much a score, and through the fact that at some times the drovers cheated the toll-keepers one keeper resorted to rather a bright idea, and after this the passer-by were treated to the very humorous sight of an old woman holding a stick, over which the sheep jumped one at a time, being counted as they did this novel hurdle. Across the road from the toll was the inn known for a long time after as the Old Inn, a part of which still stands and forms part of that property owned by the late Mr G. Bickerton. There the late Queen stayed for a night when on her way to Balmoral. Some of the inhabitants still remember that Inn, and one old lady tells with delight of how in her mischievous school days she used to trick the ostler and steal his beans. In these days Cowdenbeath was a beautiful country village, with nice rural cottages, green fields and clear running streams, with a population of less than 500. So spake one who had the pleasure of knowing the present town in this blissful state. Everybody went to church then, either to Beath or to that church in the factory grounds kept now as a storehouse. When a marriage was celebrated, the marriage party walked to and from the church in a procession, two abreast, the bride and best man taking the lead going, and when, of course, coming back, the bridegroom took the best man's place. Stagecoaches too, were much in evidence. One ran daily from Kinross, but after the Old Station was opened, it stopped at he Inn, taking passengers to and from the further inland towns, which before the Perth railway was opened had to fall back on Cowdenbeath for the nearest railway facilities.

*"The West Fife Echo"*  
May, 1907.

*THE FIFESHIRE MINER.*

---

Mining in Fifeshire is peculiar in this - the great majority of the thousands who labour in the pits are natives of the "Kingdom". They are clannish, the Fife pitman, and they are mostly settlers. The great bulk of them belong to families who have resided in the mining villages for generations, and whose forebears have all been pitmen. They do not encourage importation. A few wander into Fifeshire from Lanarkshire, and once a Pole, greatly daring, descended upon Kelty - a sort of pioneer of his race in the mines of Fifeshire. He did good work in Kelty coalfields, but the strange speech of the Kelty "Raws" oppressed him, and he is believed to have gone to Carfin, where he will not find himself among an alien people.

KELTY AND ITS INSTITUTIONS.

The cause of the growing prosperity of West Fifeshire is to be sought not in Dunfermline nor Kirkcaldy, but in the greyer mining towns of the County, and, as the worthy postmaster of Kelty would say, the capital thereof is Kelty." It already possesses in the Aitken Pit the largest coal mine in Scotland, employing 1100 men and having a daily output of 2200 tons, and the Mary Pit, which is not far from it, when fully developed, will be of even greater capacity. With these and other pits in the vicinity the Kelty coalfields have a daily output of 4000 tons. Naturally, therefore, Kelty is a considerable town. The length of its main street would make a Kirkcaldy man envious. The Postmaster is proud of Kelty, and Kelty is not likely to suffer so long as the Postmaster lives and rules. A veteran in years and service, he remains marvellously clear-headed. He is somewhat of a precision in speech. He is a man of many parts, a sort of Poo-Bah with a Fife accent. Among other things, he is clerk to the School Board, a ruler in local administration - in fact the mainspring, one feels, in the communal life of Kelty. Industrial Kelty is busy. It cannot afford to be otherwise. Socially it has known more picturesque days. About the only social event nowadays is when the brass band returns with fresh laurels. The Kelty Band is the champion band, and the natives are prouder of that fact than of their huge output of coal. But Kelty has had its day of social greatness, when the old inn stood on the Great North Road mine host bearing the historic name of Charles Stuart; and the Blairadam Club flourished. It is interesting to note that mine host retired from inn-keeping to control the Kelty Post Office, which was one of the earliest post offices in Scotland. The present admirable Postmaster cherishes the history of the Blairadam Club, nor does he forget to tell you that Sir Walter Scott was a member. He produces a heavy tome wherein you may read that "Blairadam Club met on Fridays; spent Saturdays in visiting places of historic interest; while on Sundays they duly attended divine worship at the Kirk of Cleish." "A great book that," says the Postmaster, handling it lovingly; "man it tells ye a' thing."

### THE HEN AND THE CHICKENS.

Blairadam was an intellectually and spiritually improving club; unlike the "Hen and Chicken," which they still tell you of in the Crossgates. It flourished in the days when coaches rumbled along the Great North Road. It was rather an exclusive club, and the Earl of Wemyss was the president. It is not recorded that the gentlemen of the "Hen and Chicken" burdened themselves with historical lore, or that they were regular in their habits of worship. But they had great "nichts." Motor cars now speed along the Great North Road, and the old inn, scene of many glorious "Hen and Chicken" revels, has disappeared long ago. But Crossgates retains its old-world flavour, and it is still a haunt of the festively inclined. It is a favourite walk from Dunfermline on a Sunday; the journey bringing the traveller "within the meaning of the Act."

### FORDELL AND DONIBRISTLE.

There are many pleasant roads besides the one to the Crossgates in the mining County of Fifeshire. The colliery towns like Cowdenbeath and Lochgelly, are cheerless enough to make a man who knows the black country of Lanarkshire feel as though he were at home. But the roads that lead to these forbidding capitals of toil are dotted with fair villages, the like of which you will seek for in vain in mining Lanarkshire. And most charming of all are Fordell and Donibristle. They look anything other than mining villages. Donibristle is perched on a hill; Fordell nestles in a hollow; and both are surrounded by a spacious extent of smiling pasture-land. If the pits which are the source of the life of both places are conspicuous also, the tiny house with their dainty-curtained windows that line the trim rows are gay with flowers as though they were the abode of gardeners rather than colliers. Fordell is a place of renown in mining annals. It was the scene of the old Parade (which did not make for clear heads), by the miners celebrating the freedom conferred upon their forefathers by Sir John Henderson. The Parade has been dropped. These be strenuous days, and the miners of Fordell no longer go a-marching or a-dancing; they cultivate their flower-beds. And perhaps their love of flowers is due in large measure to the worthy schoolmaster in Donibristle. He has taught the young idea there for over thirty years, and while succeeding generations of children may have forgotten much they read in text books, the smiling gardens seem to bear witness that their admirable teacher instilled into them something of his own passion for the beautiful in nature which abides with them. In Donibristle there are three buildings, almost in a row, which form, as it were, an epitome in stone of its educational development. There is the original Parochial Schoolhouse; near it a larger building which served as the school in the earlier days of compulsory education; and there is the present Seminary, large and stately, dominating the others.

## METHOD IN DRINKING.

Pit life would be agreeable enough if all the miners dwellings were as picturesque as those of Donibristle and Fordell. All over the Fifeshire miner is perhaps better off than his brethren in Lanarkshire. His house is rarely less than of three apartments. He is a lover of music as well as of flowers, and if his room is not always adorned with a piano, be sure that in his kitchen there is a melodeon. On the whole he is a thrifty man, and if occasionally he indulges in a mild spree and enters the public-houses open and unashamed, need he be specially blamed ? Moreover, as a Cowdenbeath worthy remarked, there is method in his drink. Already out of the profits of his spree a District Nurse has been provided, a hall erected, and Saturday evening concerts established during the winter months. "And," explained the worthy, who must also be a humorist, "the concerts, ye ken, are a coonter attraction to the public-house, but I canna say that the public-house trade suffers frae them; but that, ye ken, would never dae or we would no be able tae provide mair coonter attractions." After all, let it be remembered, that if on Saturday nights three hundred and odd miners seek the cosy gleam of the tavern bar, on every day of the week 4000 tons of coal are produced from the neighbouring pits.

*"The West Fife Echo"*  
May 1907.

*THE PITHEAD WORKER.*

---

Between the hours of five and six o'clock in the morning, summer or winter, rain, fair, or snow, in all conditions, will be met the type of women whose lot has been cast under not the most comfortable and happy conditions. In the cold, winter mornings, with a shawl wrapped tightly round her head and shoulders, she makes her way to the pithead to pursue her labours. All the difference in the years clothing may be summed up in that shawl, and the year to her has only two seasons - the time when she wears the shawl, and the time when she does not require it. Her boots remain the same - large, coarse, and heavy, originally meant for men, though quite in keeping with the short skirt of very coarse material. This is the working garb of the "pitheader."

Her age may be anything from fourteen to thirty, but the majority are from eighteen to twenty. Her duties around the mine are many, and although she does not run the great risk of the underground worker, still there is always danger to be feared amongst the machinery and the juxtaposition of the mine in her field of labour. Pulling the full hutches off the cage, taking off the pins (pieces of wood or leather with various letters or marks indicating the name of the men who filled the hutches), running them along to the different sidings, putting the empty ones back on the cage, picking stones from amongst the coal, carrying pit props, are some of the duties to be performed. That the work is laborious there is no doubt, each woman doing as much as what would be required of a man. Often long after the miner has done his eight hours, up the pit, and away home, the pithead girl is still working away, carrying props and loading them on the cage for the brushers.

Late in the afternoon she may be seen going home at the end of her days work, tired, and with the grim outlook of the next days repetition, a sure reminder of her lot. At home there is always a thousand and one things to be done, and evening is far spent before a welcome respite comes. In the summer twilight she may be found sitting on the step knitting or with a friend taking a quite "dander" along a country lane leading unconsciously, and without any pre-arrangement, to some quiet corner, where many of the workers collect and listen to the strains of a melodeon, there having been many efficient players among the miners. On a gate or a loose stone sits the musician, and around, some sitting, some standing, are his eager listeners of both sexes, passing jocular remarks and good humoured criticism. Songs, choruses, dance tunes, reels, petronella, "Flowers of Edinburgh," are given out without only a change of tune to denote that another tune has been commenced. When one players repertoire is finished, the instrument is handed to another, and another list is set agoing. At intervals someone present is made the subject of a joke, and the joyous laughter rings out with generally the person or persons at whom the joke is thrown the greatest participators. Soon someone

will say, "Come on, Jock, gies a waltz." or perhaps a reel. The melodeon is handed over to Jock, who accepts it quite confidently, and those who feel fresh enough choose their partners, both sexes taking the initiative, and in a green or on the hard road the feet keep time to Jock's playing, while all the time the player is either smoking a clay pipe or looking around the country side in seeming contemplation of the next day weather, or asking a friend, "Hoo mony tubs he had that day." By and by, when the darkness deepens, without any proposal, one player takes the melodeon, and rising walks away slowly, the rest all follow on behind, and to a varied selection of tunes the company makes for home. One by one they fall away with a "guid nicht," and soon quietness reigns.

In the winter time a visit to a place of entertainment is exchanged to staying indoors, with maybe a neighbour in, when the hours pass swiftly, talk be confined to working incidents, or how someone enjoyed the Gala day. This, the miners Gala Day, is the pithead girls' great time for rejoicing - preparations are made, shops being visited, and new hats ordered long before the auspicious first Monday in June. The dress worn, particularly the headgear, and the young man accompanying the wearer, are the chief subjects of conversation long before the event has taken place. This is the day of the year when those women let themselves loose for thorough enjoyment, and who can deny them this well earned time for zealous recreation. In the early morning a young man calls for his female friend, and to the strains of the village band the happy couple walk to the station, and parade the streets of their destination in close proximity to "oor band" nearly all day. The purchasing of gingerbread, toys, etc., for the members of the family is a very pleasant occupation. On return home the band is again followed through its parade of the streets, and in the dancing at intervals the pithead lassie is in her glory.

There has always been a murmur of disapproval of the fact that the gentler sex should find occupation in and around mines, and on this point Legislation is much needed. The dissent comes from two sources. Firstly, it is argued that it is not a fitting occupation for women - a very considerate reason when one takes into account the nature of the employment and the language used by some of the men they come into contact with. The second ground of objection is of a more selfish order. It is argued that women thus employed fill up positions required for men, thus men are ousted out of certain work. The work is done at a cheaper rate, as women do the same amount of work for less than half the wages.

*"The West Fife Echo"*  
May 1907.

*THE WORK UNDERGROUND - PLEA  
FOR THE SHORTER DAY.*

“A Working Miner” in an article contributed to the “Liverpool Daily Post”, gives a graphic account of the work underground.

DOWN INTO THE UNDERGROUND.

Let me take you with me for a day down in the mine. Not that one day is different from another, but just an ordinary day. Commencing at the lamp station any time between 5 o'clock and 5.30 a.m., we get our lamps, and then we go to where the men descend into the pit. As the cage is ready we stoop down and get in along with a number of others. The banksman drops the catch, shouts “Lift up,” and the engineman reverses his engine, then the catch is removed from under the bottom of the cage. “Let down” is shouted, and you feel yourself rapidly rushing down. After descending a few hundred yards you get out from the cage, and you grope your way to where an official examines your lamp. One day when groping my way to the fireman to have my lamp examined, I fell into the dip-hole, so great is the contrast with the sudden transition from the light on top and the dark below.

GOING INTO THE INNER WORKINGS.

Having had our lamps examined (the writer says) we take off some of our clothing so that we can walk more comfortably to our work, which may be any distance from about a few yards to a few thousand yards, and having divested ourselves of some clothing, which in my case is trousers, jacket, and vest, we go forward clad in calico drawers and shirts to the inner workings. You may begin to travel the required distance, which varies in height, and in many places you are compelled to crouch very low, and having now and then bumped your head and skinned your back, you arrive at what we call a shunt. Here you strip off your shirts, and you will find that by this time you will be perspiring pretty freely - if you have any perspiration in you. Feeling thirsty, you will have a drink from the can you have carried with you, along with a little food to help you with your day's toil. From this shunt, if there are tubs (sometimes you have to wait for one) you get a tub, and you leave your drink and food and off you go to the far end of the workings, which may vary both in distance and gradient. You will have to have scotches to help you hold your tub when going down a brow, and whenever it is down a brow one way it is up brow the other, requiring pushing or mangling up again. You need a “bow” on the tub end to prevent your fingers being trapped by the roof being low. Sometimes it is not more than three-quarters of a yard high. However, with a little patience you arrive at the place where you may fill your coals in your tub.

### THE COLLIER GETTING COALS.

To get your coals you have to hole them - that is, you must get a pick and hit out right and left, either under or over, till they are holed a yard or two deep, and two or three or more yards long. Before you have done all this holing, you will probably have your tub filled with coal, so you will take it to the shunt, where you will feel ready for a little refreshment. This you have brought with you in a little tin box, and with your can of drink you will enjoy your food for a few minutes. Then you try another tub. Where I am there are a dozen drawers on a single road more than 100 yards long, so that when we meet a full box coming, we have to turn the empty over two or three times before we can get clear to the far end. You are stripped nearly naked; you are sweating so that you can wring your drawers out. When you get to the far end, you drill with a machine, and have your coals blown; then you stand or crouch in the powder smoke and heat, your lamp burning very dimly, and get your tub full as quick as you can. Your tongue is parched, and when you do get to your can you feel ready to empty it at one draught. However, after having a drink, you rush in again as hard as ever you can, probably with some props in your tub, so that you can make yourself as safe as you can. Going through a brattice cloth with your tub, you are jammed into by a full tub coming out, and your light is put out. You lift your props out of your tub, turn your tub over on one side, and, if you have no mate down with you, you try to borrow someone else's light. However, you and I are mates to-day, so you can turn your tub back in the dark, grope for your props, put them in your tub, and off again, to meet again, and turn over again. You get to the far end again where your mate is working with a light, and, not forgetting to lift out your props and put your tally on your tub, you essay to fill your tub again with coals, while your mate secures the roof with the timber. When you are full, you think it would be better if your tub were a little nearer the coals down, so you get a pair of rails about 6 feet long, and put them on your next empty tub. When you are coming in, meeting full tubs coming out, you lift off your rails, turn your empty over, let the full tubs pass, turn your empty tub back, lift it on, put your rails on your tub, and off again to the far end. Then you lay your rails on a sleeper, if you can get one, and nail them with nails, if you can get some - both being very hard to procure sometimes, and if you can't get any, you must manage without. However, with time and patience and hard work, your body being in a state of heavy perspiration all the time, you again get your tub full, and hurry off again to "mangle" or "crash" it up brow and hold it down brow to the shunt, where you may again get a ready empty tub, or have to wait until some empties come into the shunt by haulage, jig, etc.

### EATING WITH MICE RUNNING ABOUT.

You take advantage of waiting for an empty by eating the food you have brought, and you will be very fortunate if you have much drinks left by this time. Having refreshed yourself - sometimes having to eat in the dark with mice running about you while you sit



on the floor - you again go in with a tub to do as well as you can, pushing or holding back, twisting on landings with rails out of place, requiring tubs, both empty and full ones, to be lifted and dragged. Sometimes the roof is so low as not to allow the tubs to be lifted on, or catching broken bars, and broken props, cutting your head, and “skinning” your back. Your drink and food consumed, your tongue parched for the want of a drink (no wonder colliers are a thirsty lot) you try and manage until three or four o’clock, as the case may be, and you feel ready for your shirt, as they say when they have done.

#### SETTING OUT FOR THE PIT EYE.

What with the foul air (and it needs extra emphasis on foul), heat, and toil, where is the man who would deny us limited hours? You then set out for the pit eye, sometimes a mile or more away. I know men who have to rest four or five times travelling the brow I travel at the present time, and it is not the worst brow I have travelled in twenty years toil in the pits around here. We come to the pit bottom, where some take off their drawers, being wet with sweating, put on their trousers and other clothing, and take their place ready to ascend to the surface, and how thankful I am once more to see the green fields and glorious light after what I have just left behind. But my tongue is parched, and I long for a drink. I am a total abstainer from intoxicating beverages, and where is the man, the carping critic, who objects to the Eight-Hours Act, that will not allow me to get home a little earlier, there to enjoy with my wife and four little children the cup that cheers but does not inebriate?

#### COAL GOTTEN FOR 2s 8d A TON.

There will be abler pens than mine wielded in response to the invitation to hear the other side from the working miner (the man of the mine declares). What I have tried to describe are just plain unvarnished facts. It has been said that our British miners are the best paid in the country. British miners are paid the very best in the country in proportion to their skill. Quoting from my price list before me (an we are especially favoured, for every collier has not a price list to go by), we get 2s 8d per ton, and for that we draw nearly 200 yards each way, crab up 12 yards, have to blow our coals, and pay for our own explosive expenses. Before we leave the pit it cost us on an average 4s a week for union, clubs, oil, weighing, sharpening, explosives, infirmary, etc. There are extras for crabbing or pushing up - 1d per ton for every ten yards, or fractional part, after the first 15 yards, and drawing 1d per ton after the first 200 yards.

#### THE PERILS OF THE PIT.

I contend we need both skill, strength, and lasting powers to obtain a living wage under present conditions. It has been declared that our work is not exceptionally dangerous. But take the statistics from the miners’ relief societies, or black out from the columns of your paper the accidents arising from mining, and I think it needs no words of mine to refute the statements of the writer. You know we colliers are human beings, living in a

Christian country, but through oppression and bullying our lives are narrowed down until we have very little confidence in men and very little hope in God. Our lives are darkened and blighted, probably because we do not dignify our labour as we ought, and because we are employed in the bowls of the earth we are sweated as no other industry is sweated; and yet I believe our souls are as valuable in the sight of our Creator as the people who spend as much on a dress or a motor car as would keep our families a year. I may be running a risk through writing, as others have done. I have no axe to grind; I like my work; I keep somehow managing without getting into debt; and my desire is that my fellow-workers may be better morally, and abstain from all that is evil and cling to that which is good.

#### THE REMEDIES FOR REDUCED OUTPUT.

In conclusion (says this miner), there could be suggested many ways whereby the same output of coal could be maintained in spite of limited hours. The length of drawing could be shortened, the meeting in the drawing roads could be avoided, the roads could be remedied, the timber and rails ought to be conveyed to the far end by the day-wage men; there should be better facilities for transit to and from the pit eye to work and back, and no waiting for tubs. Sometimes we have to wait an hour or two at one time for a tub. When the day-wage men have been in the working place it should be left ready for the piece worker. Many other ways that are known to all who have any experience of mining work could be suggested.

*“The West Fife Echo”  
January, 1909*

*“A Wee Keek Back”*

*BATHS FOR MINERS*

Proposed Experiment at Aitken Pit

*The Old Conditions of Work and Housing.*

We are pleased to hear that the Fife Coal Company mean to make an experiment in the provision of baths for the use of the Aitken miners. The workmen who are willing to make use of such baths and pay 1d per week towards their maintenance are to be asked to send in their names to the colliery office. Experiments made elsewhere show that a payment of 2d or 2 and a half pence per week per person is required to keep the baths in proper working order, when the numbers using them regularly are considerable. At Kelty the Fife Coal Company will be willing to undertake the full half of the cost, and it is to be hoped that the miners who are found to be willing to enter into partnership with them in this scheme will be sufficiently numerous to justify the introduction of a reform which, if adopted, would add incalculably to the comfort, the health, and to the self-respect of the mining communities. It has to be admitted that former attempts to institute this most desirable reform have not been markedly successful, as the evidence (quoted here-under), given before the Royal Commission and the interesting reminiscences of a correspondent ("D.S."), only too plainly show. Half a century ago baths were erected at the pitmouth at West Wemyss, but the building were soon demolished, because the miners showed little appreciation of the provision made for them to "wash and be clean." Similarly, baths put into the Aitken Hall buildings at Leven have fallen into desuetude; nor can it be said that the Aitken Baths at Kelty are extensively taken advantage of by the working miners. Within recent years, however, the miners, as a class of workmen, have made most gratifying advances as regards the social conditions of life; and it may be found that, if conveniently situated and suitably equipped baths be now provided, the men who have shown a desire for comfortable and healthy homes and have developed tastes in horticulture, ornithology, and music, will prove equally responsive to lavatory developments, which will enable them to go to and return from the scenes of their arduous labours in clean and smart clothing as well as with clean bodies. At no distant date, too, let us hope a tramway service will be provided, which will save the men the weary and uncomfortable waiting at railway stations which, at present, consume so much of their times and endanger their health.

---

*"A Wee Keek Back"*

## ROYAL COMMISSION EVIDENCE.

Mr G.B. Walker, a member of the Institution of Coal Engineers and of Mining Engineers, submitted the following statement regarding baths for miners to the Royal Commission on Mines last November: -

“Facilities for washing and changing clothes have been to some extent provided in metal mines and some chemical industries for an indefinite time past, but mainly in cases where the dirt adhering to the clothes and the person is of an offensive or highly-coloured nature, as in some ironstone mines and many chemical industries.

“In coal mines there has been a difference in the habits of miners in various districts, some localities being characterised by personal cleanliness of body and clothing, and others by the reverse. The coal mines of Northumberland and Durham have always been honourably remarkable in the first category. The North Country collier generally had special flannel pit clothes periodically washed and “tubbed” every day on his return from work, even when he lived in a one-roomed cottage; and this was so general a custom that the family took it as a matter of course. It was so in my own experience during my pupilage in the county of Durham 35 years ago. Cottages since then have been much improved, and more privacy is now possible; but I believe the custom of washing the whole body is still the rule.

“In other districts the habit of cleanliness is far less common. Special pit clothes are rather the exception, and old clothes of any kind are used for the pit. It is customary to wash the upper part of the body daily, but the extent is very varied; and in some cases much care is not taken to wash even the whole of this part of the body. There was (and is) a curious idea in many places that to wash the back in weakening. Of course, everywhere there are miners who are scrupulously clean; and it is equally true that there are many who are not.

“The cramped house-room in many villages may be the cause of neglect of bathing, together with the difficulty of a good supply of warm water; and habits once formed are difficult to change. Another thing is that men come home from their work hungry and tired, and when they have taken their meal, in what is expressively called their ‘Pit-muck’, they are indisposed to rouse themselves for a thorough wash, especially when a ‘tub’ is beset with difficulties.

“What is required is a means of bathing which is - First, convenient and quick; second, comfortable; and third, a matter of course. This is provided at all German mines and most Belgian and French ones.

“The foreign miner, now provided with a convenient means of washing, would not forgo it. But his readiness to bathe in the presence of his fellow-workmen is accounted for by his having during the period of his military service been compelled to bathe in the presence of his fellows as part of the military routine. He became accustomed to it, and

to the comfort of bodily cleanliness. The habit once formed was no longer irksome but pleasant, and the discomfort of remaining unwashed in filthy clothes, unbearable. British workmen have not had (in many places) the opportunity of forming the habit, and their modesty would sustain a shock if they had to bathe in public. No doubt it may be said to be false modesty, and I believe once the custom is recognised no harm comes to the continental system. But it may be taken for granted that British miners will always object to bathing in crowds, and therefore the same system as is general abroad cannot be adopted here. Fortunately, it is not an insurmountable difficulty. It is got over by the plan which I shall have pleasure in submitting.

But, before I speak of the arrangements by which hundreds of men can bathe simultaneously on the Continent, I will revert to the three conditions of success already referred to.

#### (1) Convenience and Quickness.

“The baths should be according to Continental ideas, arranged close to the pit. The men enter them on their way out of the pit building. The lamp-room is first passed, and the lamps given in; then they go straight into the baths (Kape, or Waschkaue.) These contain a large hall with a lofty roof and cement floor. Each man has his own hook, cord, and pulley, on which he hangs his clothes and to which a padlock is attached. His home clothes are drawn up out of reach. He strips and walks to a corridor in which are a number of shower baths with warm water. The floor is cement and the water runs away through grates. Three or four minutes under a pleasant shower of water at 90 degrees, (using his own piece of soap) makes a clean man of him. He walks back to his clothes, rubs himself down with his own towel, and dresses in his home clothes, pulls up his pit clothes towards the roof, locks his padlock, and in 10 minutes he is on his way home, a clean comfortable man, ready for his dinner. The variations to suit our ideas of privacy is a series of compartments, each intended to be used by twelve men, of whom two as a rule may bathe simultaneously, each compartment having two recesses with showers. Each compartment is provided with twelve lockers to hold the home clothes. The pit clothes (being dirty) are hung in an adjoining corridor. Thus the same result is secured without loss of privacy.

“It may be conceded, I think, that convenience and quickness are thus secured.

#### (2) Comfort.

“The baths are kept at a pleasant warm temperature by steam heating, and regulated by the attendant by the thermometer. It is undoubtedly a very comfortable process, and a man feels greatly refreshed after his arduous and exhausting labours.

### (3) A Matter of Course.

“Here is our main practical difficulty. The British Workman dislikes being forced to do anything he does not choose for himself. He is inclined to refuse to do even what he may admit to be good in itself if compelled to do it by authority.

“The only remedy of this is for the formation of a healthy public opinion on the subject among the mining population. There should be a propaganda by those who would be clean to convert those who do not mind being unclean. It is not a case of where it is desirable that ‘he who is filthy should be allowed to be filthy still.’

“In this matter the women can, and should exercise a powerful influence. What a relief it would be to them if they could realise it! Imagine a father and two sons coming home, as they now do, to a small cottage, covered with grime and dirt, and saturated with perspiration. The smell of the pit clothes is often appalling. What a nuisance this must be to a clean housewife! The wonder is that the miners’ homes are as clean and sweet as they are. I need not labour the point, but if the women should take up the cause, and say their men folk must come home washed and leave their working clothes at the pit, the thing would be done.

### German Testimony.

“As to baths in Germany, I cannot perhaps do better than give an extract from Selbach’s ‘Hand Laxicon of Mining.’ (Page 325)

‘The bathing arrangements formerly consisted of masonry tanks with about three feet of water. The bathers entered in troops and washed side by side. Although fresh water was constantly running in and dirty water out, a whole shift of men bathed practically in the same water, which very soon became dirty and black. All classes of men bathed together nude; young and old; the youth of 16 with his father. This system was disgusting, unhealthy, and immodest.

‘These objections do not apply to the baths of to-day. The present baths are shower baths. The shower baths are in an adjoining place to the undressing hall. (In these shower baths sections are corrugated iron screens.) By means of a perforated spray nozzle each bather is supplied with clean water at 35 deg. centigrade (95 Deg. Fahrenheit), the shower cleansing his body of dust and dirt. The dirty water is drained from the sloping cement floor. The rooms for undressing and washing for boys under 18 are separate from those of the men. The clothes of the miners are suspended from the roof by galvanised hooks. The heating is by steam coils fed with steam from the boilers. Ventilators are placed in the roof. The rising warm air dries any damp clothes. The walls of the undressing hall are covered to a height of 6 feet 6 inches with metal plates, and the floor is fine concrete. The floors are swilled several times a day with a hose pipe. The shower room is 50 feet by 33 feet, and 16 feet 6 inches high. It contains 66 showers. The walls

are covered with white tiles. The undressing room for youths is separated by a 9 feet high wall of corrugated iron from the men's hall. The regulation and heating of the men's hall is carried out by the baths attendant. Latrines and closets are also provided.

#### The Silkstone Experience.

“If it is desired that I allude to our small experimental arrangement at Wharncliffe Silkstone Collieries, I may say that about ten years ago baths were added to the workmen's club, which belongs to the Company. Two classes of baths were provided - Slipper baths and shower baths. The club runs these baths, and a charge of 2s 6d per quarter was first charged for the daily use of the shower baths. This included soap, but not towels. It was found that soap was wastefully used, and the charges were reduced to 2s without soap. The caretaker washes the men's towels. There are 8 showers, 48 lockers, and 4 dressing compartments. These baths have been well used by a limited number of men. The cost was about 400 pounds. The plan also shows that an extension for 250 men has been proposed, but, before building, the directors wished for information as to whether the additional accommodation would be made use of, the cost being one thousand pounds. The response was disappointing, and the extension has not been proceeded with.

“From what I have heard, I believe many colliery companies would provide baths for their miners if there was a demand for them; but it is generally believed that if they were provided they would not be used. Public opinion must first be stimulated in the desired direction, and in this matter the leaders of the men, whether in or out of Parliament, might give a lead. Several miners' leaders are, I know, in favour of baths. When there is a genuine demand I have no doubt the provision will be made. Although my own experience scarcely warrants it. I think the best way would be to introduce the system gradually by planning baths at the most modern collieries in such a way as they can be enlarged as the demand arises. Sufficient ground should be left close to the pits in new mines for baths large enough for all the workmen, as I believe before very long the demand for these facilities will be made, and the future collier will wonder how his ancestors did without them.”

*The West Fife Echo*  
*March 24, 1909*

*BATHS FOR THE AITKEN PIT.*

Up to the present time Mr Carlow's offer, on behalf of the directors of the Fife Coal Company, to provide a suite of spray baths at the Aitken Pit, Kelty, is meeting with considerable support from the men. The local branch of the Miner's Union have recommended the men to view the proposal favourably. Full 350 men out of 1000 employed have now signified their desire to have the baths and to pay the weekly dues for their upkeep. At the outset there was some demur shown towards the adoption of the scheme, from a fear chiefly that the clothes would be intermingled. Mr Carlow, in a letter, has, however, relieved doubts on that point. According to his scheme, the apartment in which the clothing will be stored will be fitted with a large number of poles. Each man will have the use of a pole. When he makes a shift of clothing he lowers the suit he is about to wear and suspends that which he has taken off. He will be provided with a key which, being different from all the others, will prevent anyone making off with his pole. While the clothes are suspended there will be a continual current of hot air playing on them, so that they will be warm and dry when he makes the change. The kind of bath to be provided was also a point on which the men had doubts. They objected to slipper baths. Spray baths are the variety selected, because by their use the ablutions are more quickly and effectively performed, and besides they mean the provision of a continual stream of fresh water. The building will be erected with the view of making provision for a number of men coming off the largest shift, say 500. There is no doubt that the baths will be a boon to the miners. Not only will they enable the men to start and leave off work under the most hygienic conditions possible in the circumstances, but, as a worthy representative of the class put it, the cost to the men will be saved in "getherin coals. This typical miner meant that when he and his sons return from work under the present conditions, it was simply the fact that they were in a measure robbed of home comforts. In order to dry the clothing for the following day all the available space in front of the fire was utilised, and the occupants of the house could not, especially in the winter time, get so much of the benefit of the cheering embers as they would under the proposed new conditions.

*The West Fife Echo*  
*April 14, 1909*



*JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS AT  
LASSODIE.*

HANDSOME GIFTS TO MR JOHN  
BROWNLIE AND DAUGHTER.

*GOLD MEDAL FOR THE OLDEST  
WORKMAN.*

For generation to come Saturday will be regarded as a day of days in the villages of Lassodie and Fairfield. The jubilee of Mr John Brownlie's connection with Lassodie, Elgin, and Wellwood Collieries was celebrated with all the enthusiasm and earnestness which the event deserved. From Hensneb on to the furthest off point at Fairfield, and from pit to pit were there indications that the occasion was one of surpassing interest. Flags were observed flying at various points. Mr Brownlie's residence coming in for more than a passing share of that form of decoration. Before the event of the day took place there was an air of expectancy manifest among the community. Groups of men stood at different corners, presumably discussing what was about to take place, and the local band paraded the villages.

Unfortunately, Mr Brownlie's advanced years forbade him from taking more than a mere countenancing of the occasion. He was too frail to leave the house.

THE CEREMONY IN THE HOUSE.

In the afternoon, he was met at his residence by a deputation representing the workmen of the various collieries and made the recipient of some handsome gifts. Mr David Archibald, manager of Lassodie Colliery, headed the deputation, of whom the other members from Lassodie were Messrs Thomson (Cashier), James Stronach, William Hunter, John Strachan, Andrew Herd, James Reid, and Ralph Erskine, and from Wellwood, Mr Wilkinson (Manager), and Messrs Simpson, Thomas Hynd, and James Grieg, Mr James Stronach, the Company's oldest servant, handed over the gifts which consisted of a handsome illuminated address, bearing prettily executed sketches of the two collieries at Lassodie and Wellwood, a beautiful solid silver salver, and a necklet and pendant for Miss Brownlie. These gifts had been subscribed for by the workmen at the collieries and by other friends, notably former employees at the collieries or old associates of Mr Brownlie. From the Spowart family at Broomhead was sent a massive silver rose bowl. Mr Brownlie indicated briefly but none the less effectively his delight at receiving such handsome gifts. Thereafter the deputation withdrew.

### THE PUBLIC FUNCTION.

A public meeting then took place in the village hall, to which all the gifts were taken, and where a more formal ceremony took place before a crowded gathering of villagers. Mr Archibald, who presided, was supported, by among others, Miss Brownlie, Messrs H. Brownlie, John Brownlie, Thomson, Simpson, James Greig, William Andrew (a former cashier), John Addison (Charlestown), Hugh Elder (Dunfermline), James Stronach, and Thomas Hynd. The chairman intimated apologies for absence from a number of gentlemen (old friends of Mr Brownlie, including Dr John Ross, Dunfermline, who said that he had unfortunately to fulfil a prior engagement at Wigan).

### INTRODUCTORY FROM THE CHAIR.

The chairman said they would agree with him when he said that the event was a rare one for Lassodie - in fact it was a rare one anywhere. The occasion spoke volumes for Mr Brownlie's tactfulness, and for the manner in which he had met the work people and business friends with whom he had to come in contact. Many questions arose upon which persons agreed to differ, but it was difficult in every matter concerning financial business to keep friends. The meeting that night showed just how tactful Mr Brownlie had been, when so many ladies and gentlemen were gathered to see honour done to him. He thought they would all agree with him when he said the committee had been fairly successful in their efforts. He had no idea, when the prospect was mooted, that they should have had so happy results. The wildest dreams of his imagination did not go beyond the illuminated address, when they purposed conferring an honour upon him who had now lived in the community for 50 years. No one had more admiration for the movement which had been carried out than he had. He had more opportunities of coming in contact with Mr Brownlie than the most of them had, and certainly more opportunities of getting an idea of his character.

At this point, a duet for piano and violin was rendered by Miss Elder and Mr McIntosh, Dunfermline. Thereafter the first of the presentations were made.

### PRESENTING THE GIFTS.

The Chairman said they were all doubtless aware that they were there assembled to do honour to whom honour was due. It was a unique occasion to have the privilege of recognising an employer who had spent 50 years of his life in a village like theirs. Jubilees occurred more frequently in ministerial than in commercial careers. The occasion, however, was not the fiftieth year of Mr Brownlie's business career but the sixty-fourth. It was the fiftieth year of his connection with Messrs Thomas Spowart & Coy. Unfortunately Mr Brownlie's health in the evening of his life had not been so robust as to enable him to be with them, and for that very good reason they would excuse

his absence at what to Mr Brownlie and to them was a most memorable event. (Applause.)

Mr Brownlie came to Lassodie in March 1860, and he (the Chairman) understood that that was the first month that coals were drawn from the colliery. At that time a local man who posed as an authority on coal mining declared that all the coal that would be extracted from Lassodie would be so worthless that the labour of digging it would be of as much value as ploughing the sands. The late Mr Spowart and Mr Brownlie thought otherwise. The colliery of the village was at that time only starting, and he had heard the late Colonel Dewar say that there was nothing but plovers and whaups and other wild fowl flying about the place. Under Mr Brownlie's guidance the colliery grew, and a corresponding growth took place in the village. So had the growth increased that for the last three years the collieries had been employing a larger staff of men, and they had now a greater output than at any period since the formation of the Company. (Applause.) Few, if any, collieries in Fife or even Britain enjoyed the distinction of having a managing partner who had been connected with the firm for 50 years. Mr Brownlie was still able to give his advice, valuable from his ripe experience of business and as a man of affairs. (Applause.) Mr Brownlie had not so much been brought in contact with the Wellwood Colliery for a number of years owing to the state of his health. It was in Wellwood that the firm of Thomas Spowart & Coy. Originate 50 years ago, and all that time Mr Brownlie had kept in touch with the practical and commercial interests of the work. Mr Brownlie had always realised the duty which one owed to a community among whom he had resided, and he had always served them without hope of reward or even of encouragement. He was a member of the School Board for 21 years, but for reasons of health he was obliged to retire from that office. He was a member when the Board was instituted in 1872. Previous to that he had sole control of the education of the village, and he (the Chairman) understood that he always faithfully and efficiently discharged the duties of that office. He severed his connection with the Board at the same time as the then Chairman did, both having served for 21 years. Mr Brownlie at that time jocularly suggested that like soldiers they should get a pension, and the Chairman replied that that was all right, as he had made an arrangement with the parish that they should each retire on full pay. (Laughter.) Full pay was nothing; and that was where the joke lay. The village Church had had Mr Brownlie's full sympathy. He took a very active part in its formation, and he had been the treasurer ever since the church was built. The salary attached to that office was also nothing (Laughter.) At all times he was ready to forward the good work, giving his time as well as moral and financial support. Mr Brownlie was not so well known to the younger, as he was to the older inhabitants, all of whom spoke of him as a gentleman for whom they had the greatest respect and esteem for his honourable career and upright dealing - one whose word was as good as his bond, who would not countenance doing anything wrong even although right were to follow. He encouraged the doing of what was right and did his best to suppress what was wrong. (Applause.) Mr Brownlie was ably seconded by his late revered wife in his good deeds. Both were ever ready to do whatever they could to relieve genuine distress. Many a grievous burden, of whose existence only the giver and receiver were aware, was made

lighter by them. (Applause.) During the last strike, about fifteen years ago, Mr Brownlie, he understood, endeared himself to many by his actions. He gave them all the assistance which he possibly could, so that at least the children would not be made to suffer too much. All the time he (the Chairman) had been at the place he always remembered the children twice a year with soirees and books. His relations with employees had been fairly cordial and satisfactory. The employees had had to take part in County strikes, but there never was a local strike. The late Mr Weir, miners' secretary, he understood, had a great admiration for Mr Brownlie - indeed, he believed that the admiration was mutual. He was sorry to say that black clouds were hanging over the main industry of Lassodie meantime, and they had had severe depression for about a year. He only wished the Jubilee had come two years earlier (although that would unfortunately have made Mr Brownlie two years older) when wages were much better and employment rifer. He could assure them that it was satisfactory for the employers and for all concerned when the men were getting a large, full wage. The Company were also then getting a better share of what was agoing. (Applause.) In very trying times it took everybody to try to do their best. Coal mining was the only industry in the village, and the colliery was not one of the finest in the country. The underground operations were pretty difficult to manage, and it said a good deal for Mr Brownlie and his then manager, Mr Andrew, that the relations with the workers were so happy. (Applause.) There had been pleasing incidents in connection with the present movement of the regard in which Mr Brownlie was held by some of the most sensible and solid of the workmen. Men who had been out of his employment, and who had no connection with him or with Lassodie, when solicited, not only gave a donation, but the spontaneous and hearty manner in which they gave it enhanced its value, and sent the promoters on their way rejoicing. (Applause.) The movement had also had a splendid reception from gentlemen who had formerly been on the office staff, and he was sorry that Mr William Andrew was the only representative present. Altogether they had had 636 subscribers to the fund, and the subscriptions were doubly enhanced by the cheering letters which accompanied them. One subscriber wrote:- "*No man that I know whose labours are more worthy of recognition.*" Another said: - "*I can look back on the time spent under Mr Brownlie . . . . . For the success I have had since, I was deeply indebted to him.*" It afforded those subscribers extreme gratification to have the opportunity of joining in the movement, owing to Mr Brownlie's long and honourable career and the affectionate esteem which he was so deservedly held by all gentlemen who had the privilege of knowing him intimately. (Applause.) Mr Brownlie, like many of Scotland's sons, has shown an example to both old and young. He was a man who had gained the esteem of his fellow-men, and attained immense prosperity, not through influence but by his own ability, grip, and determination. They hoped that the close of his earthly life might be a long way off, but when that day did come, it would be true to say of him: - "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, who hast lived the virtuous life and whose honour has never been tarnished." Mr Brownlie and family, like other people, had had their ups and downs, their joys and sorrows, but he was certain that the family would uphold his reputation, and that they would look back with pride on this great event. When they did look upon that address and that handsome silver tray, they would be encouraged to go forward in their father's footsteps.

(Applause.) Concluding, the Chairman, addressing Mr H. Brownlie said - I am sorry Mr Brownlie is unable to be here, but I consider, Sir, that the community in honouring your father are honouring themselves. I have great pleasure in giving to you this illuminated address for your care. It has already been handed over to your father in the house by Mr James Stronach, the oldest employee in the Company's service. (Loud applause.) The Chairman then read the address which was in the following terms: -

*To John Brownlie, Esq., of Messrs Thomas Spowart & Coy., Ltd., Coalmasters, Dunfermline.*

*We, representing the employees of Lassodie, Elgin and Wellwood Collieries, desire to express to you our heartiest congratulations on your having attained your jubilee year in business with this Company. We recognise that the success which has been attained by the Company is a testimony to the untiring industry, courage, and conspicuous ability with which you have directed and controlled its operations.*

*It is to us a matter of the keenest satisfaction and deepest gratitude that after all those years you are able to direct the affairs of the Company and it is our fervent hope that you may be spared to do so for many years to come. In expressing our admiration for you, as an employer, we remember with pleasure and gratitude many instances of your kindness and consideration in all matters pertaining to our welfare, and the satisfactory relations that have always existed between us are in themselves a telling testimony of the high esteem and regard in which we hold you.*

*We would respectfully ask you, on this auspicious occasion to accept this illuminated address and solid silver tray, and also a necklet and pendant for your daughter, Miss Brownlie, with the sincerest expression of our affection and esteem.*

(Signed)

*James Stronach, H. Addison, David Masterton, David Keddie, Andrew A. Herd, James Reid, Ralph Erskine, Thomas Malcolm, Graham Wood, William Hunter, John Strachan, John Wishart, William Wallace, John Blyth, Thomas Hynd, Robert Simpson, James Greig, John Sinclair, Charles Ritchie, David Archibald, Robert H. Thomson William Wilkinson, John Simpson.*

*Lassodie, May, 1908.*

Concluding, the Chairman said he had no doubt the articles would be treasured in the future not for their intrinsic value only, but because they show the honour and esteem in which Mr Brownlie was so justly held by the community among whom he had spent the greatest part of his life. (Applause.)

The following was the text of the inscription on the salver: - *“Presented to John Brownlie, Esq., by the employees at Lassodie, Elgin and Wellwood Collieries and a few friends, on the occasion of his jubilee year in the service of Thomas Spowart & Coy., Ltd. Lassodie, May, 1909.”*

#### MR BROWNLIE’S SON REPLIES.

Mr H. Brownlie, in acknowledging the gifts on behalf of his father, said he was sorry that the duty had fallen to him to express on behalf of his father his warmest thanks to them for the presentation of those magnificent gifts. His father had already received the gifts at the hands of the deputation, and had expressed in his own way his thanks for them, so that it fell to him to express to the remainder of the 636 subscribers his gratitude for the response which had been given to the movement. (Applause.) He had no doubt that nothing would have given his father greater pleasure and delight than to have come to that meeting and spoken for himself. Owing to the state of his health, however, that was out of the question. It would have been impossible, even had he been able to come, to have given adequate expression to his feelings on an occasion such as that, and he (Mr Harry) did not think he was in a very much easier position. (Applause and laughter) What had struck him most in Mr Archibald’s address was the hearty reception which had been given to the proposal. The origin of it was entirely spontaneous, and the hearty reception which had been given to it seemed to his family proof of the deep rooted personal regard and affection which everyone at the collieries and outside friends seemed to have for his father - (applause) - and which was so happily expressed in the address. It was also striking testimony to the cordial and satisfactory relations which existed between the employers and the employed at the colliery. (Applause) Those relations had no doubt been put to severe tests. There had been labour troubles many a time in 50 years. He could remember some of them himself; but he could not remember any occasion on which the relations were ever other than satisfactory. (Applause.) As Mr Archibald had said, the times of stress and strain came when financial interests conflicted and when there were two points of view, if he might put it so, between the interests of capital and labour, but if the relations withstood such a test, he thought they were very well cemented. (Applause.) That had been the experience in Lassodie, and he hoped that nothing would vary it in the future. (Applause.) At present, as had been said, there were clouds in the sky, - a serious crisis was threatening the coal trade at present - but whatever the outcome of that might be, he believed and trusted that the relations at Lassodie would continue as they had hitherto existed. (Applause.) He was not a believer in the doctrine that capital and labour were or should be enemies. He believed that the position was this, that capital, rightly used, and labour, justly treated, were two parts of a machine, and these parts were useless the one without the other. (Applause.) Their magnificent present that night indicated to him that if they did not express their opinion in so many words, they certainly expressed it in their deeds, and really thought that the machine there was still working as it ought to work.

Mr Archibald had said that Lassodie Colliery began in 1859, and it was 1860 before any coal was sold. He thought Mr Archibald was quite correct. He had looked up the invoice book, and had found the first account for coal that was incurred. Previous to the working of coal, limestone was worked in a comparatively small way, about June 1860, and since then they had had nothing but coal to depend on. His father told the deputation about his first arrival in Dunfermline. Mr Spowart, when he engaged him in Glasgow, informed him that in his firm the change of servants were not plentiful. That, of course, was borne out in his case, and had been in many others, particularly in Wellwood, where they had men who had never been out of the village. (Applause.) Mr Archibald had mentioned the increase in population, the development of the pits, and the progress which had taken place within the last 50 years. When his father came to the district he believed that the house at the Kilns, and what was now the house inhabited by the storekeeper at Fairfield, besides the farms buildings of Whinneyhall, would be all the dwellings in the district. Now they had over 200 houses, and they had a church and manse, and no debt on any of them. They had a public school, but that school was not free of debt - possibly that was because they did not have control of it -(laughter)- with full postal service, savings bank, and everything else. The only thing he thought which they still remained to get was a railway passenger service. He did not think he could express to them much hope of getting that, although he could tell them that if the railway company had not provided that, it was not for the want of being asked. The company had been repeatedly approached to run trains by Townhill, Kingseat, Lassodie, and up to Cantsdam. He did not think that such an investment would be the worst they had ever made in railways. (Applause.) They were all aware of the position of affairs existing in Lassodie at present. There were more men employed in Lassodie than there ever were, although there were more houses than there were a few years ago. The output of coal was also larger than ever it was in the history of the concern. That, he thought, was a satisfactory state of matters. Wellwood, of course, as Mr Archibald had said, was not a new place. Coal would not last forever, though he understood his father told a story that Mr Spowart once met a gentleman in Dunfermline, and that gentleman said to him about the coal: - "There is only one pleasant thing about coal when you are taking so much of - it only needs a while and it will grow again." (Laughter.) He could only say that they, representing the company and the employees were quite a happy family, and further description was superfluous. (Applause.) Mr Archibald had referred to the work which his father was able to do on different Boards, and his story about the School Board pension. His father served his 21 years, and he was a member of the Parochial Board. While he mentioned the School Board he did so for the purpose of thanking all of them who were electors for the support which they gave him personally at the last election. The result of that, so far as Lassodie was concerned, was unique, and they would hardly credit it when he told them that every available man in the place registered his vote. (Applause.) He had only now in conclusion to again express to them his father's thanks for their gifts, for the spirit in which those were subscribed for, and he had to thank Mr Archibald for the kind way in which he had spoken of his father. They might all rest assured that the address and tray were among his most treasured possessions, and they would be treasured by him and his family also as mementoes of that unique and eventful day. (Applause.)

### THE ROSE BOWL AND NECKLET PENDANT.

The Chairman, in intimating the gift of the rose bowl from the Spowart family, said that the committee had been forestalled. (Applause.)

Mr Simpson, cashier at Wellwood, next presided. Miss Brownlie with the necklet and pendant, commented upon the recipient's many virtues and graces, and pointing out that she had now to take the place in the family circle of her revered mother.

Miss Brownlie politely bowed in acknowledgement of the gift, and the Chairman called upon her brother, Mr John Brownlie, who he said had travelled specially from Paris to be present, to reply on her behalf.

Mr Brownlie said that they might be assured that his sister would always treasure the gift as a precious souvenir of the memorable day. The day would always be a memorable one for the honour which the workers had done to his father and to his family.

Mr William Andrew, formerly cashier, next made a few remarks. He said that from his knowledge of Mr Brownlie, which went back to 1870, Mr Brownlie ought to be held up as a pattern to them all. (Applause.) Mr Brownlie's energies were not merely confined to business. He looked after their moral as well as their material welfare, and he thought that a community should respect and esteem such a man. (Applause.)

The Chairman having intimated that they had reached the end of the programme.

### PRESENTATION OF THE MEDAL.

Mr H. Brownlie got to his feet, and intimated that he had arranged for a slight addition. And he thought that when he had finished they would condone his offence. When he stood there two or three weeks ago he said there were two names on the pay book of the first pay, and those same two names were on the pay book last pay. (Applause.) They had that day, in no small way, done honour to one of them, and he wanted to recognise the other. (Applause.) He had little doubt they knew the man to whom he referred - Mr James Stronach. (Applause.) Mr Stronach was there before his father. He was there in September 1859, so that he was further into his jubilee than his father was. They all knew that no man in the place was more respected than Mr James Stronach. (Applause.) From the nature of his work in taking charge of the houses, he came in contact with every house-holder and with everybody, and he, (Mr Brownlie) had yet to learn that he had made a single enemy, even though he did not do everything that people wanted (Laughter.) Ever since he was a boy, "Jimmie" had been one of his best friends, and he hoped that friendship would long continue. (Applause.) In commemoration of Mr Stronach's jubilee he had had a gold medal struck, and he had now to present him with it. He was a man whom they delighted to honour, and he trusted there would be many years



of service before him still. (Applause.) The medal bore the following inscription: - *“Presented by Thomas Spowart & Coy., Ltd., to Mr James Stronach, joiner, in recognition of 50 years faithful service at Lassodie Colliery - 1859 - 1909.”* (Applause.)

Mr Stronach, who seemed to be taken greatly by surprise, and after looking admiringly at the medal, said that was what came from doing honourable duty. Let then do what was right and everything would come right. (Applause.) He thanked Mr Brownlie for his handsome present. Mr Stronach concluded, after a halt I hivna had time tae mak’ a speech, and if I hed I wid hae lost a nicht’s sleep owre it. (Laughter and applause.)

The proceedings terminated with a vote of thanks to the Chairman, on the motion of the Rev. J. Duncan.

In the course of the speech-making, Miss Elder and Mr McIntosh contributed a second duet. Miss Elder delighted the audience with a display of her rare executive abilities as a pianist, and a quartette was rendered by members of the brass band.

The band afterwards played dance music, and the merriment was kept up till a late hour.

*The West Fife Echo*  
*June 2, 1909*

*GREATER COWDENBEATH.*

The enterprising people of Cowdenbeath are as ardent in devotion to their town and as strong in their faith in its future as loyal Germans are in their affection and ambition for their Fatherland of which they love to sing it must greater be. The town has not yet reached its majority as a civic community; it was only incorporated as a burgh in 1891, and yet it is aspiring to be as regards population the fourth, or, it may be, the third largest town in the Kingdom of Fife. If it continues to grow at the rate it has done during the past twenty years, it will soon surpass Dunfermline unless the ancient city manages to annex Rosyth, and it will even outstrip Kirkcaldy, the most populace of the Fife Burghs at present. The Town Council, who have lately got added to their Magistracy two Bailies, and to the Municipality three more members, are now promoting a Provisional Order for an extension of their municipal jurisdiction, which will include within it a population of between fifteen and sixteen thousand, about the number of the inhabitants of Dysart, fully twice the population of St Andrews and three time the population of the county town - ranking it next to Dunfermline with its twenty-six or twenty-seven thousand, and Kirkcaldy with its thirty-five thousand. It is a place of mushroom growth compared with Culross; but if all goes well with its new scheme the population of Cowdenbeath before next year may be forty times that of the most westerly of the many venerable and picturesque burgh of Fifeshire.

Cowdenbeath has other claims to consideration besides its large and still rapidly growing population. It has developed a vigorous public spirit. It has enriched itself with not a few public institutions that mark the healthy and enterprising modern civic community. Some of these are still modest in their dimensions. The Library is in need of enlargement, and we do not doubt if its claims were effectively set before Mr Carnegie, as they easily could be, substantial assistance would quickly be found forthcoming. Its educational establishments are extensive and remarkably well equipped, and a technical school is in the course of development which will emphasise the title of Cowdenbeath to a metropolitan status among the colliery communities of West Fife. Music is extensively cultivated and widely appreciated; a public park is being provided; a drill hall bears testimony to the heartiness with which the Territorial Army scheme has been developed in the town and district; while the Town Council buildings which have been erected are in respect of their architectural features and their extent worthy of a town with a history and name. Friendly Societies, temperance organisations, and other agencies are actively co-operating with the churches in the promotion of the social well-being and the virtue which are the best foundations and securities for happiness and prosperity. The geographical advantages of the situation of the town on the Great North Road and of ready railway accessibility from north and south are certain to be appreciably augmented by the tramway service by which the mining villages of West Fife are to be linked together and at the same time with Dunfermline and the Naval Base. An improved water supply and electric lighting may also be expected soon to enlarge the public amenities.

Of course it cannot be claimed that the town is free from blemish. At times a disorderly element makes itself unpleasantly obtrusive. The scenes to be witnessed on its main street on a Saturday night tell you that intemperance and hooliganism have not been quite banished from its midst. Occasionally, too, the proceedings of its Town Council show a lack of restraint and courtesy that afford revilers an opportunity of pointing the finger of scorn at its municipal service. All its well-wishers must desire that these causes of reproach should be removed. Civic patriotism is perhaps as strong and as ardent in Cowdenbeath as in any community in the land. What is needed, is that it should be made not only increasingly vigilant and assertive but also more conspicuously identified with the restraints and refinements of culture. The enlargement of the Council, and still more of the burgh boundaries, creating as they do a sense of heightened status, may be expected to develop the sense of responsibility among the electors as well as within the Council. In proportion as that responsibility is recognised will public life and municipal service be accounted more dignified and more honourable. The best men in the community will be attracted to it, and will strive with all their might to assure for Cowdenbeath a good name not only for municipal enterprise and efficiency but also as a centre of culture and refinement. The zeal and activity of its social and temperance reformers, the patriotic devotion shown by its Territorial force, the aims and equipment's of its educational institutions all give cheering evidence of elevating and ennobling influences at work fitted to make the public life of the town worthy of the third most populous centre in the Kingdom of Fife.

*West Fife Echo*  
*August, 1909.*

*IN DAY OF OLD.*

DUNFERMLINE, 1791 - 1812.

In the "Dunfermline Quarterly Record," issued along with "Progress," the Rev. R. Stevenson, of the Abbey Church, publishes the first part of a carefully written sketch of the conditions of life that prevailed in the city between the years 1791 and 1812. Among the facts noted are these: - The population in 1791 was 5192 in the city, and 9550 in the parish; 800 looms were at work in the parish, and about 400 more in the outlying villages; the annual value of linen manufactured was computed at 45,780 pounds in 1780, and at from 90,000 to 100,000 pounds from 1810 to 1814; till 1803 the annual income of a weaver, including his "cord drawer" might amount to thirty pounds. We append a few extracts: -

The Coal Trade And The Black Slaves.

Of the 100,000 to 120,000 tons of coal then raised annually in the parish, three-fourths or thereby was conveyed to Charlestown to be transferred to foreign ships. In the working of coal women and children were engaged as well as men, there being some 700 altogether so occupied in 1815. Pit workers received comparatively high wages for the times. A hewer could earn from 18s to 20s per week; smiths and joiners, from 16s to 17s; sinkers, about 15s; and ordinary labourers, 10s; while the women or "bearers" who carried the coal in "corves" or baskets by a stair to the surface, or to the pit-bottom when the pit was more than 18 fathoms deep, received from 5s to 10s. They paid for their light and the upkeep of their tools, but they had a free house and coals for the hewing. Any advantage, however, in respect of wages was cancelled by conditions which kept them out of touch with society, and formed them into a retrograde class by themselves. They were known in Dunfermline as the "black slaves." They were bought and sold with the pits. With the proviso that he would be housed and also attended to in sickness, a needy parent would sometimes sell his son to the Coalmasters; and it was not uncommon for infants at their baptism to be bound over to service in the mines for life. An Act was passed in 1775 securing freedom from this serfdom for those who entered the pits thereafter, and relaxing the bond for those already in them; but it was not until 1799 that Parliament terminated the system, though it was long after this before the effects of it disappeared. The employment of women in mines was forbidden by an Act passed in 1842.

Food And Wages.

The annual wage of a ploughman was five pounds with his board, and of a domestic servant two pounds. Crowds of men and women from the town found employment in the harvest field, the men received from 8d to 1s per day, and the women 6d, with a meal in

the morning and at noon. A shilling could go much further then than shortly afterwards or since - the best beef was 4d per pound, the best butter, 8d, eggs 3d to 4d per dozen, and chickens could be had for 6d each. There was also the perennial harvest of the Forth at hand, where the supply sometimes so exceeded the wants of the people that the fish were used for manuring the fields; and even salmon in the autumn months were often so abundant that the harvestman was wont to introduce into his contract as condition to the effect that he must not be expected to live on salmon alone. But by the time of Waterloo (a singularly cheap year) agricultural commodities greatly increased in value. Beef doubled in price, and dairy produce trebled, while oatmeal, which for five years 1788 to 1792 averaged 11d per peck, cost from 1808 to 1812 an average of 1s 8d. Money became dearer from the householders point of view. A person can manage somehow to live without linen, but no how without food, and while the income of the weaver from contracted employment fell, the wages of the farm servant rose. The ploughman now got sixteen pounds instead of five pounds, the domestic servant five pounds instead of two pounds, an ordinary labourer 2s 3d without rations instead of 1s, and reapers 1s 6d instead of from 6d to 1s with rations. With meal selling at 2s to 3s per peck, the farmer could afford the increase; and he could afford also to adopt the best means to enhance his returns - to buy good seed and stock and the latest implements to apply suitable top-dressing from Limekilns or elsewhere, to attend to the principal of crop rotation, and to turn to better profit poor or waste pasture land. All this provided employment and increased the population in the rural portion of the parish, which, according to the census of 1811, contributed more than a third of the total increase for the previous ten years.

*West Fife Echo*  
*October 1909*

*HOUSING OF MINERS IN FIFESHIRE.*

—————  
DR. DEWAR ON SANITARY DEFECT  
—————

TESTIMONY TO GRADUAL IMPROVEMENTS.

The Medical Officer of Health for the County of Fife in his last annual report on the Health and Sanitary Conditions of the County and Districts devotes a special appendix to a report on the Housing of Miners, prepared on the instructions of the Local Government Board. Dr. Dewar estimates the coal strata area of Fifeshire at 125 square miles, or about one-fourth of the whole County. Within this area there are 62 coal mines giving employment to fully 23,000 male persons and up to 900 females. He states the total mining population of Fifeshire at between 102, 000 and 105,000.

Difficulties and Responsibilities.

He acknowledges the difficulties in the way of the provision of adequate house accommodation in mining districts which are being rapidly developed, but pressing home responsibility for overcrowding to some extent to the miners themselves, he takes note of the relatively small proportion of his total earnings that the typical miner is willing, or wont, or considers it proper to spend in rent. He is aware of deductions for rent and taxes, for coals and light, and in some cases for medical attendance which are made from the earned wage, and the frequency with which working time is broken, but he points to the testimony of the managing director of the Fife Coal Company that the annual average wage paid to the underground workers in the employment of his Company, including boys, was in 1901 one hundred and five pounds. Quoting from the same authoritative source he mentions that in March 1909 “when the shortest time was being worked the average earnings of the underground employees, man and boy, old and young, 9000 workers in all in the service of the Fife Coal Company was two pound eleven shillings and sixpence (*this would be per fortnight. Jim C.*) By way of explanation of the comparatively small amount spent on rent by the miners, he points to the conditions of tenure which prevail and the difficulty of obtaining prompt remedies for unsanitary and other discomforts. He proceeds: -

*“In a large proportion of cases the coal company who employes the miner is also his landlord. Excluding the miners who live within the burghs, and excluding the unmarried men (and a few married men) who are lodgers either with their parents or with strangers, I believe that this statement applies to at least 90 per cent. Of the miners in Fifeshire, namely, that they reside in houses owned by the Coalmasters. The system has*

*advantages. A rent has not to be collected; it is subtracted from the fortnightly payment and so is scarcely missed. But the system has also disadvantages, of which two are especially grievous. The first is that the worker is completely in the employer's power. No matter though the windows fall in from the effect of subsidence, no matter though the roof admit the daylight as well as the rain and snow, the tenant cannot leave the house, or take active steps to rectify his grievances, since either step would entail the loss of his work. The tenant's other difficulty is associated with the magnitude of some of the coal companies' interests. (It will be remembered that one such company controls practically half the mining in Fifeshire, and, since the recent amalgamation, five-sixths of the miners are in the employment of three companies.)*

*The fact that a drain whose existence was unknown has given way and is pouring out its contents under a kitchen floor, though an urgent enough matter for the tenant, is of but slight and remote interest to the gigantic company which owns the property. Procedure under the Public Health Act requires time; even apart from that, the companies are so large and so influential that it is not easy to bring even moderate and reasonable pressure to bear upon them. A managing director recently expressed surprise at the unsanitary state of certain houses, the property of his company, which he was good enough to visit along with me; yet many letters had been addressed to him on the subject before the visit took place. It is clear that much discomfort may have to be borne by tenants who live under a system by which such things are possible."*

#### Bad Name Due To Defaulting Few.

When a dog gets a bad name it has many revilers, and the house accommodation of Fife miners has long suffered from the evil reputation arising from the condition of a comparatively small minority of the dwelling-houses. Dr. Dewar's testimony is that so far as actual house construction is concerned - that is disregarding for the moment the sanitary accommodation such as privies, closets, ash-pits, wash-houses - the proportion of miners' houses in Fifeshire to which serious exception could be taken is small, certainly not over 8 to 12 per cent. He wishes, therefore, to emphasise the fact that the terms of criticism and disapproval of which he makes use apply only to a small proportion of the housing accommodation provided for the coal miners of Fifeshire.

#### Four Main Causes of Evil.

He mentions four main causes; (1) initial faulty construction of the dwelling, (2) disrepair more or less associated with indifference or carelessness on the part of the proprietors, (3) disrepair directly and principally due to the tenants, and (4) the effects of subsidence - as illustrations of the mischief produced by the last mentioned of these causes he specifies the subsidence at Parknuek on the outskirts of Dunfermline, Little Raith, about a mile south of Cowdenbeath on the great North Road and Thornton. Describing in detail the internal conditions which operate against healthy, physical and moral life, Dr. Dewar

remarks that the great majority of the dwellings are houses of 2 or 3 rooms, and than proceeds: -

*“Until the eldest members of the miner’s family reach the age when employment is commenced, the ordinary house is of two rooms. The kitchen is paved with square brick tiles, or if of more modern construction, is floored with wood. The beds, usually two in number, are in recesses with a partition of wood or brick. The old-fashioned and abominable box-bed of the burgh and the agricultural districts is very rarely met with. All the family sleep in the kitchen, the mother explaining in countless cases, that though there is a bed in the ‘room’, the children will not sleep in it since the kitchen is warmer. The ‘room’, smaller in area, is almost invariably wood floored. As a rule it contains a bed, but, unless lodgers are kept or the eldest members of the family have reached adolescence, it is not habitually used. The ‘room’ is generally found to contain one or two bicycles, the perambulator, a trunk or two, or the like. It is not made use of as part of the habitual living accommodation of the house. The ceilings are fairly high, eight and a half to nine feet being an average height. The floors are generally at a height of one or two steps above the level of the street or adjacent ground. This diminishes the tendency to dampness, and also proves convenient by preventing the casual passenger from seeing what is happening within, maintaining the privacy of the home. The opposite conditions, however, when the floor is from 3 to 6 inches below the level of the street or road, is to be seen in quite a number of ‘rows’. It is difficult to conceive the motive which led the original builders of these houses to perpetrate this condition. In wet weather, especially, the inconvenience is sometimes very great.*

*“Take an average house of this description inhabited by a couple with three young children. The wife and mother, let us say, is tidy and thrifty, the husband sober and steady; an outhouse for coals is provided behind the house; the house has the use, one day a week, of a boiler and tub in the common wash-house. All the elements of health, comfort, and happiness are present. Close at hand is an identical house, it may be, except that there is neither coal-house nor wash-house, so that the coals and firewood have to be stored beneath the bed, and the kitchen converted once a week into a reeking, steaming place of clammy discomfort. Here the family are five or six in number, none yet attained the wage-earning age; the breadwinner drinks a third part of his earnings; the wife, disheartened and dispirited by the unending and futile struggle, has given up trying to keep her house in order, and no longer cares that things are not as once she would fain have had them. All the elements of misery, of squalor, of disease are there. Thus, important as a well-constructed house may be, it is clear that there are other factors - the due provision of accessories to the dwelling, temperance, thrift, and an initial high standard of cleanliness - which are all of greater importance in the attainment of good domestic sanitation in the broadest sense of the phrase.”*



### Objectionable Accessories.

Speaking next of objectionable accessories he illustrates the discomfort and danger arising from the ubiquitous ashpit or privy midden. When this convenience is absent, as it is in some hamlets of the worst type, ashes and vegetable refuse and filth of all sorts are deposited at random on the ground beside the house, and foul waters are simply thrown out from the front door. "It will be agreed," he says, "by all that every house in a village or township should be provided with a place for deposit of waste matters, solid and liquid, and a penalty imposed on those who fail to make use of the provision made. More important even than construction of ashpits is its proper use and frequent emptying and cleansing. It requires but an elementary grasp of socialism to perceive that she who deposits dead animals or putrid flesh in the open ashpits in the middle of the square is not achieving the greatest good of the greatest number. But when the retort is made "How otherwise can I dispose of them?" I confess I had no answer, for in many of these mining villages there is no available ground wherein such extremely offensive matters could be disposed of by burial.

The Medical Officer notes with satisfaction that in certain communities, such as Bowhill and Kelty, water closets are general, but in the great majority of the mining centres the sanitary accommodation consists of privies, rarely or never containing pails, all but invariably of the privy-midden type. The ideal remedy (he says) in all centres of population is to replace the privies by water-closets. When that is not feasible, or until it becomes so, a privy should be provided for every two or at most three, households and a key retained by each.

### The Things Required.

As the two elementary requirements of domestic hygiene the Medical Officer recommends the provision of a coal shed for every dwelling and a common wash-house with a boiler and a tub for every five families, to be used alternately by arrangement, one day each week, such as is provided in the village of Oakley and elsewhere. The arrangement and distribution of the houses he regards as forming a question of the first magnitude in sanitation. He notes with disappointment that in this respect the recently formed and recently extended mining centres show least favourable. He proceeds: -

*"A Kelty, Bowhill, Lochore, and other communities of similarly rapid and recent growth, not only are there no features of the garden city; there is not even a trace of a desire or a yearning for it! Most of the new houses in these centres have no patch, no single square yard, or private ground. The houses are not unduly approximated; the areas could scarcely be called crowded. But the cottages are placed in bare streets, with equally bare spaces between the rows. There is no growth of grass or vegetables, flowers or shrub; though, it is true, it usually happens by way of compensation that the children can reach the open country without having to go any great distance. The average miner's satisfaction with those conditions is all the more surprising in view of the fact that his*

*wages are almost sufficiently high to allow him to purchase some luxury in the form of a garden plot, and that there is no insupportable geographical difficulty to hinder the fulfilment of such a demand if it existed, the mining communities of Fifeshire being divided by stretches of open and sparsely inhabited country.”*

Dr. Dewar next discusses the subject of rivers pollution. He states that the dirty ditches, streams, and rivers flowing through and by the mining villages and towns of Fife, not only rob the people, and especially the children, of a natural advantage of no little value, but substitutes therefore an offensive feature in the environment of the community. The Ore, and its tributaries he describes as little better than sewers in parts of their courses. He notes that certain communities, such as Kelty, Crossgates, Bowhill, and Thornton have excellent drainage systems. Very few, however, have attained to great success in the purification of their sewage. In Lassodie and Wellwood, where waste waters are merely thrown out upon the road or into the street gutters, one, he remarks, cannot feel that the drainage is in a satisfactory condition. He notes as a very suggestive fact “that the higher infantile mortality rates in Fifeshire are found in areas of high wages and great prosperity.”

#### Testimony To Steady Progress.

While an ardent reformer who sees much to cause him disappointment, the Doctor, however, is not by any means a pessimist. He recognises that the great majority of the houses inhabited by miners in Fifeshire attain to a fair standard, and that a perusal of the public health records for the past 18 years shows a steady and continuous progress. He concludes: -

*“Every year witnesses the renovation, closure, or demolition of numbers of unsatisfactory dwellings and the erection of a still larger number of houses of modern, and, as a rule, of a satisfactory type. The ordinary process of renovation is as follows: - The old uneven floors of stone or tiles is removed and replaced by boarding, the ground below having been excavated so as to allow of efficient through ventilation. The walls are raised; the windows are enlarged, constructed so as to open, and counter-weighted. The walls are lined with wood or with lath and plaster. A roof of slates is substituted for one of tiles, and provided with rhones and rain-water conductors. The surrounding ground is lowered, if necessary, and drained. If the soil is of suitable nature, and the site reasonably dry, a house so improved cannot but be regarded as a satisfactory dwelling. If, in addition, a closet, or suitable privy, and wash-house and coal-house accommodation be provided, it remains with the tenants to determine whether domestic comfort or shall not be secured.”*

*West Fife Echo  
June 1910.*

## *HOUSING OF THE MINERS*

Fife Coal Company's Experiment.

The Fife Coal Company have decided to abandon in the meantime the erection of baths for the miners at the Aitken Pit, Kelty. Having borrowed the idea from the German Collieries, where baths at the pits are highly appreciated by the miners, the Company thought to add to the comfort of their workers at Kelty by providing a structure where the men could on leaving their work get themselves thoroughly cleaned from coal grime and proceed to their respective homes in the clothes of their everyday wear. Before proceeding with the erection of the baths, however, the Company decided to test the feeling of the men in regard to the proposal. The men's response was not gratifying, notwithstanding the fact that the charge proposed for the use of the baths was the nominal one of one penny per fortnight. It seems that the principal objection of the men to make use of the baths is the possibility of clothes becoming intermixed, with the further possibility of results accruing which are not in the direction of cleanliness. If the Company do provide baths at the pits, they will do so on a very much restricted scale to that originally intended. Had the proposal been encouragingly received at Kelty, it was the Company's intention to make similar provisions at other collieries. Now, however, they will seek to provide the means for cleanliness in another direction in so far as their newer collieries are concerned. At Valleyfield, near Culross, they have begun the erection of houses for their workers, and in order to ascertain how the use of the bath at home would be appreciated they have decided to fit up a number with baths. If these dwellings are sought after more will be erected as the development of the works proceed. That development will come in the immediate future, as it is anticipated that the two shafts, probably the largest in the country, will have pierced the splint coal at a depth of 210 fathoms in the course of three months, and will give employment to over 1000 men. Should the Valleyfield experiment receive a response which will warrant extending it to other new districts, such as Lochore, where more houses will soon be required for the workers, or Kinglassie, where two new pits have just been finished, and where there will be a fairly large population, houses with baths will be built there.

*The Dunfermline Journal*  
*August 13, 1910.*

*FAILURE OF THE KELTY BATH SCHEME.*

A correspondent writes: - There is another reason than that given in Saturday's "Journal" for the Luke warmth with which the men at the Aitken Pit, Kelty, received the Company's offer to provide baths at the pithead. That reason is the train service did not suit. The last of the men to be drawn up the pit at present have barely time to reach the train, and often they only get to the platform in time to spring into a carriage as the engine moves away. They would thus lose the train if they were to spend time bathing. Moreover, what about the men travelling by the same train and engaged at other collieries? Were they to wait in cold, damp garments until the Aitken men had had their baths? The proposal would have been none the worse of a clearer explanation and such difficulties as these cleared away when the offer was made. Doubtless these obstacles could be overcome by some re-arrangements of the trains or the making of the journey by tramcars, which will be running by the time the baths were built. I am informed as many as 250 Kelty men intimated their readiness to welcome the baths. That a larger number did not respond might be explained by the fact that they regarded the innovation as a little staggering - in other words, they as well as their fellow-workers from the district, require time to think over things and so to speak to become accustomed to the idea of bathing.

In my opinion the baths at the pit would be a boon to the miners if the difficulties indicated were overcome. There is no doubt that the time spent in bathing at the pit would have created far sweeter conditions of home life. It is a quite common thing for miners' houses to have two beds in daily use in the kitchen. Can the condition of life be healthy for the children where perhaps during the greater part of the night steam is arising off the pit clothes hanging in front of the fire? Nor is that mentioning the unsanitary conditions which prevail when the father, and it may be one or two sons are washing themselves in a bucket on the kitchen floor. Baths at the pit have their drawbacks, but taking all things into consideration they are worth making some little self-sacrifice to secure. Nevertheless, baths in the houses are better, because of their privacy, and the Fife Coal Company are to be encouraged and congratulated in erecting dwellings of the type they have at Valleyfield.

*West Fife Echo*  
*August 17, 1910.*

*HOUSING OF THE MINERS.*

## Fife Coal Company's Experiment

In order to obviate any misunderstanding which may have arisen in connection with the article of last week dealing with the Fife Coal Company's proposal to provide baths for miners, the writer desires to make it plain that the Fife Coal Company have not departed from the idea of providing baths for miners at the Aitken Pit, Kelty, nor on the other hand are they prepared to be at the expense of fitting up baths into all the houses which are about to be built in districts where new communities have been created by the mineral workings. In places such as Kelty, which is practically built up as far as miners' houses are concerned, the Company cannot of course test the desire of the men to have baths in their houses. The houses are there and cannot now be provided with baths. But bath service at the pit is a feasible proposal, and the men are likely to be tempted to indulge in daily bathing by a scheme possibly of less pretensions, but consistent with the old ideas. If the innovation becomes popular and warrants extension of the bathing, that extension will be provided, but in the meantime it is felt that it would be foolish policy to erect a large and elaborately fitted structure which might stand empty. Similarly, in new communities such as Valleyfield, this Company cannot be expected to provide baths in every house, but baths will be fitted up just as the demand for them is made. And the houses will be let at a very moderate rental. A gentleman intimately associated with mining affairs, especially from the men's point of view, told the writer the other day that the Valleyfield houses were the most convenient dwellings which he had seen for miners in the country, and he said so after being in miners' houses both in new and old colliery districts.

*The West Fife Echo*  
*August 24, 1910.*

*IS COWDENBEATH UNDER POLICED?*

---

Considerable attention has been drawn recently to Cowdenbeath, its rapidly increasing population as proved by the census, its importance as a centre for the populous surrounding mining district, and its need for an increased police staff, as was suggested at a recent standing joint committee meeting.

For the purpose of giving information on the point, a representative of the "West Fife Echo" has collected the following statistics: -

Cowdenbeath has a population of 14,000; Lumphinnans, 300; Hill of Beath, 1224; and Kirkford, outwith the burgh, including the rural districts, nearly 500. Leaving out Hill of Beath, which although policed from Crossgates, yet is under the jurisdiction of Cowdenbeath Police Court, the resident population of the district under Cowdenbeath and Lumphinnans police control is 18,000. With the statement by Mr James Terris at hand that there are 20,000 in Cowdenbeath on a Saturday night, our representative gleaned the following particulars: - On Saturday, notwithstanding the inclement weather, there were three thousand persons at the football match in the North End Park, there were over (including both houses) four thousand at the Music Hall, and yet all the evening the High Street was crowded on both the side walks, while a large number paraded on the street itself. All the Public Houses were exceptionally busy, and in many the space seemed taxed to its utmost. Special cars were run from Kelty and a special train from Arniston, while all the afternoon and evening those from the outside districts flocked into the town. The number of people who were in Cowdenbeath on Saturday was certainly not less than 30,000. What was the strength of the police? As far as our representative could make out, there are 1 Sergeant (one being ill), five police constables, and two drawn from the outside district. Last month the Cowdenbeath Police Court was a record, 113 persons appearing before the Magistrates. On one Monday morning there were 25 prisoners, and of that number over 20 had been arrested on the previous Saturday, and the police stations are a mile apart, namely, at Park Street and the office at Morrayfield. When the arrests were made, it was thus clear that two policemen were required to convey a drunk and incapable person to a police station, for that time a portion of the town was not under police control.

With a view of seeing the police supervision of the town during the night, our representative walked up the High Street between eleven and twelve o'clock. In the vicinity of the Fountain he met two police constables trying the doors of property there. Proceeding further, a very bad breach of the peace was going on at the New Station, the language of a young man to a female being disgusting in the extreme, his cries of "blood for blood" being easily heard a hundred yards away. Not far off a man in a state of intoxication was lurching in front of a car, and was dragged aside by a passer by. Near Foulford Street, while two men and a female were passing, a man was committing a

disgusting nuisance at a newsagent's door. The first sign our representative saw of policemen was two officers in the Lumphinnans district at the corner of Lochgelly Road. On inquiry it was learned that the Lumphinnans police quit work at one o'clock in the morning, and that the two officers at the Fountain are therefore the full night staff.

That night what might have been a very disastrous fire took place at Kirkford Pit. With the now large amount of valuable property in Cowdenbeath a fire might take place in Cowdenbeath with great loss of life and property in the early morning, which a better police staffing might have prevented. Surely the time has now arrived for an addition being made to the staff of the Cowdenbeath police, and a substantial addition at that. Cowdenbeath is now reckoned to be the third most populous place in Fife. Surely it should be policed as such.

*West Fife Echo*  
*April 1911*

*BATHS AT COLLIERIES.*

In 1911, a Dr J.S. Haldane, writing to the "Times" on the above subject had this to say: -

The reasons which makes changing and thorough washing at the end of a shift desirable are not directly connected with the health of miners, for there is nothing unhealthy about coal dust, and coal mining, with all its risks, is one of the most healthy and wholesome of occupations. The main reason is that a miner who returns home unwashed and in his pit clothes must necessarily bring into his house an amount of coal dust which is apt to soil everything and every person in the house. He has often only the living room in which to wash and hang his clothes to dry. Society judges and in the main rightly, of social standing by outward appearances, and the families of miners suffer accordingly; or else the wife has a constant struggle, which is often too much for her, to keep the children, herself, and the house decently tidy. In many districts the colliers and their families are a class by themselves, looked down upon, on account of their appearance, and almost shunned by their neighbours, although probably no more manly or intelligent class of working man than the colliers of this country can be found anywhere. Miners who travel in Public Conveyances in their pit clothes are naturally objected to most strongly.

Washing and changing at the pit-head would save endless discomfort, trouble, and dirt, and could be more quickly and conveniently done than at home. Why it has never become universal at collieries I am quite at a loss to understand. At metalliferous mines in this country it is a matter of course, and the necessary accommodation has been provided for by law for nearly half a century. In Cornwall, for instance, the miners, mine officials, and occasional visitors like myself wash and change in comfort after going underground, whereas from an average colliery, whatever sums of money it may be earning, one has usually to go back in more or less unwashed condition, and with the feeling that one is leaving black marks everywhere. The great superiority in this respect of the collieries in Westphalia and other Continental districts is the first thing that strikes an English visitor, and has impressed me quite as much as it has my friend Mr Davies. The need of washing and changing accommodation for ordinary miners varies considerably at different collieries and in different districts, however, according to the nature of the housing accommodation, its distance from the colliery, and other factors.

I must venture to question your suggestion as to the connection between the dirt of a miner's occupation and a high birth-rate. The high birth-rate in mining districts is due, I believe, to the fact that young men trained from boyhood to mining work can be sure of a good livelihood at an early age, and consequently marry early. If the dirt does not help the birth-rate it certainly does the death-rate, particularly among children. The dirt of coal dust is harmless, it is true, but it inevitably becomes associated in a miner's home with other kinds of dirt which are anything but harmless. On this matter I can speak with some knowledge of both inside and outside the miner's houses.



You have clearly pointed out the practical difficulties which are likely to arise if Clause 77 of the Coal Mines Bill is passed in its present form, and I think you are right in this estimate. To compel men by law to take baths daily is hardly possible in this Country, and to compel coalowners to supply baths which are not used are absurd. There seems to be no more need of compulsion on either side than exists in the case of metalliferous mines, providing that the accommodation is sufficient for such a proportion of the men who want it. The expense is not great, and there should be no difficulty about the men sharing a reasonable proportion of it. If the Clause were passed with modifications in this direction, I have little doubt that in a few years washing and changing at the pit-head would become the established custom at all mines.

*The West Fife Echo*  
*May, 1911*

### *BATHS FOR MINERS.*

Comment on the proposal embodied in the new Coal Mines Bill to have baths erected at all mines for the convenience of miners is almost universal. The opinions expressed, however, are conflicting, and it is evident that the experts who drafted the measure have anticipated even the best informed of our miners and mining officials. Mr Paul, General Manager of the Lochgelly Coal Company, the other day at the Mining Institute of Scotland said it will be troublesome to introduce as the men object to it, even although it is meant for their advantage. It is quite true that the average miner approaches the question with a feeling of scepticism and dread. So much depends upon the arrangement of baths. If the arrangement is not satisfactory, the baths would become worse than useless. When the miner come out of the pit he will not be satisfied unless things go right at the baths; and if they don't, he will naturally go home to his 'missus' with his troubles and his coal dust. Other mining officials predicting such a result say the proposal means wasting the coalowner's money on a thing the miners' wont use. But in this matter we are hastening to conclusions far too precipitately. All that the Bill provides is that "in every mine required to be under the control of a manager, sufficient and suitable accommodation and facilities for taking baths and drying clothes shall be provided at the mines for the persons employed underground in the mine, regard being had to the number of persons so employed." No details of a workable scheme are given, and until definite details are brought before the country it is impossible to express an honest opinion.

#### Toils and Trials of the Housekeeper.

Nobody can gainsay the fact that a workable bathing scheme will revolutionise the domestic life of the miner, and will be a boon and blessing to his wife. Dr Haldane, already famous for his research work in the interest of the miners as affecting white damp, has expressed himself in favour of a bathing scheme, and vividly pictures the awful drudgery of the life of the miner's wife in her hopeless battle against dirt and disease within the limited space of her humble dwelling. We do not require to go out of the county to find a sequel. Apart altogether from the evidence we have of the sordid side of life in miners' houses, such as is being disclosed in Kingseat at the present moment, let us look into the life of the miner's wife under the most favourable conditions. These are a room and kitchen and a scullery with or without water. In some cases she has half a dozen miners coming in - her husband and a family of sons. They come and go at 6 a.m., 2 p.m., and 10 p.m. She must rise at 5 a.m., prepare food and get the "laddies" away. Those who went out a 10 last night come in at 6 a.m., tired and coal begrimed. She has prepared a hot bath for them, gets a bundle of damp, dirty clothes, and after they are finished, gets the floor washed out. Every shift this is repeated, and the intervals are filled up in drying and cleaning clothes and in the making of food. From early morn till late at night it is one long struggle to keep things going, and get rid of the coal dust. This labour and dust make it impossible for her to have as tidy a kitchen as the housewife whose husband comes home in clean clothes.

### Travelling in Dirty, Damp Clothes.

And the nuisance does not end here, for now-a-days miners travel in tramcars and in railway trains to and from their work and, of course, soil everything and everybody they come in contact with. In addition to this, travelling in damp, sweaty clothes is bad for the health, and more especially in the winter times the miners, who are obliged to travel by train, suffer great hardships, and frequently contract colds. What a contrast a hasty bath at the pit and getting into clean, warm clothing would bring. Mine owners and miners alike would do well to follow the lead of the genial and public-spirited editor of the "Echo" in a recent editorial and lay their heads together to find out a popular scheme.

### The Continental Lead.

The Fife Coal Company, Limited, thought of a scheme for their Aitken Pit at Kelty some time ago, and though the directors were evidently willing to face the expense of erecting baths, they did not manage to overcome all the difficulties in the way. Indeed, there is nowhere in Britain a successful arrangement, and to find a workable scheme one has to go to Germany and Sweden. In Germany a terrible infectious disease named ankylostomiasis (miners worm) overtook the miners, and whole collieries had to be closed. The Government adopted precautionary measures for the purpose of stamping out the disease, and these included compulsory baths. These baths consisted of a large swimming bath and a number of spray baths for washing, depending on the number of men to be dealt with. The collieries supply the pit clothes, and each miner's outfit is hung on a hook attached to a rope. By means of the rope the attendant pulls them up to the roof, where nobody can tamper with them. The end of the rope is locked and each miner carries a key. He goes to the pit in his everyday clothes. On arriving at the baths he takes down his pit clothes, changes and hangs his home clothes on the hook, pulls them up and locks the rope. After working his shift he comes back, leaves the pit clothes with the attendant, who dries and cleans them, and hangs them up in readiness for the miner's return. The results are most satisfactory.

### The Derbyshire Experiment.

The writer knows of only one instance in Britain where baths have been erected at the pit for the use of miners. It has not been a success, but we think the owners were as much to blame as the miners. The reader will judge for himself after reading the details. The experiment was tried by a colliery in Derbyshire:

In 1908 the Napperley Colliery Company had under consideration the erecting of bath rooms in the houses of the miners in their Stanley Colliery, West Hallam, Derbyshire. The question of water supply gave trouble, more particularly that of hot water, and it was

thought be best to provide baths at the pit, where there was an ample supply of hot water. They were constructed at a cost of 260 pounds, and included a swimming bath, 60 feet by 25 feet, the water in which can be heated up to a temperature of 75 degrees; several ordinary baths for washing purposes, and a shower bath. While the men appreciate the baths, they do not care to bath immediately they come out of the pit; and in point of fact, few of them wash before going home. They prefer to go home, wash, and change their clothes, have their dinners, and later come to the baths. They have a swimming club with a membership of about 60. There is also a club for the miner's wives, and Monday afternoon is reserved for them.

Ordinary baths are unsuitable for the purpose. With the spray bath the miner has the advantage of always having clean water, and he has it as hot or as cold as he likes by simply turning a tap. Then, the number of baths is a very important factor. When a miner comes out of a pit his clothes are damp with sweat and very uncomfortable. He desires to get rid of them at once, and there must be a limit to the time he will have to wait his turn at the baths. Otherwise he will certainly go home. The usual winding arrangements provide that all the miners will be raised and lowered within an hour of starting time. The number of baths should, therefore, be such that all the miners can be washed in an hour's time. This in the writer's opinion is the real cause of the failure at West Hallam. The idea of a swimming club falls outside the question altogether, though that might conceivably follow if the baths could be utilised for that purpose in the intervals between the washing periods.

#### Need For Combined Effort.

The crux of the whole question lies in the interpretation of the words "sufficient and suitable accommodation" in the Clause. Surely there is sufficient organising ability amongst coalowners and miner's officials to interpret that phrase as efficiently as they do in Germany and in Sweden. Here, for example, is a set of conditions which, if fulfilled, would certainly meet all the scruples of the miner, and which, therefore, might form a basis for negotiations, viz: -

1. The owner to provide the baths, pit clothes, towels, soap, and all other bathing utensils.
2. The number of spray baths to be such that all the miners can be washed in an hour's time, or, say, 1 spray bath for every 12 miners.
3. All pit clothes to be washed, Disinfected, dried, and mended by the baths attendant.
4. Each miner's set of pit clothes top be kept entirely separate from the others, and locks provided; the miner and the attendant having a key.

5. An ambulance outfit to be kept at the baths; the attendant to be a trained ambulance man.
6. A regular medical inspection to be made, and miners suffering from skin diseases prevented from using the plunge bath.

This may seem a tall order, but I submit it as a basis which would work successfully and satisfy the most fastidious miner. The question of cost and upkeep might trouble the coal owners, as the Clause in the Bill says that not more than one penny per week shall be charged against the miner for upkeep. At any rate, the legislators seem to have decided that it is both practical and necessary to provide a washing appliance which will be both “sufficient and suitable”. It is to be hoped that the coal owners will be able to deal with this important matter as effectively as they have done in others where they have exceeded and vastly excelled the bare requirements of the Act.

*The West Fife Echo*  
*May 1911.*

*THE PIT BROW LASSIES*

---

CONDITIONS OF THEIR WORK

---

Girl pithead workers are not so numerous in Scotland as in the English Midlands, and the proposal of the Parliamentary Committee dealing with the Coal Mines Bill to prohibit their employment is not so acutely felt as further South. At the same time, the question has excited general interest in the mining districts. The female pithead worker is an old-established institution, and, as in England, she has her champions, who are quick to defend her against reflections on her conduct and character, or proposals for restricting her opportunities of earning a living.

In the Fifeshire mines there are some 500 girls so employed. Since earlier times when women used to take a share in the ordinary work of the mines, the average age has tended downwards, and now the great majority of the females employed at the pithead are young. Generally they are taken on in their 'teens, and begin with various light duties. The pithead work of the girls, however, may be divided into two main classes. Some of them work at the hutches. They push these small box-like wagons of coal along short rail sections, and attend to the discharging of their contents; an operation which in most modernly equipped mines is mechanically performed. Others are engaged in picking or cleaning the coal. The material as it is brought up from the mines is deposited on travelling screens. As these pass along, the pithead girls lift off and throw aside any stones or other foreign substances mixed up with the coal. The former is the heavier class of work; the picking is comparatively light, but those engaged in it are more subject to the grime of the coal dust.

It may be said at once that no objection is taken to the employment of girls on economic grounds. The Miners' societies, as such, are passive to the matter. They do not consider the competition of the girls is at all likely to affect the rates of wages being paid to men. At the same time, it may be noted that girls working at the hutches sometimes are employed along with men, and do practically the same work at half the pay. This was the case at one of the pits visited by our representative in the Cowdenbeath district on Saturday. Their maximum earnings reach about ten shillings per week. This is, however, subject to broken time, and the average would probably be considerably less.

Grounds Of Objection.

Where, then, are the objections to the employment of the girls in the East of Scotland? Largely the objections are sentimental. There are also physical and moral grounds of objection put forward. The employment, it is said, is not suitable for girls. This objection may, to some extent, be traced to the popular conception of work at coal pits. The miner is familiar as a coal-begrimed individual, whose work is both arduous and

unpleasant; and the association of the girls with the general idea of the industry accounts for the objection. But although the miner is dust-begrimed, the pithead worker is not necessarily so. In point of fact, she generally is not. The faces of those seen on Saturday, busy at work at the hutches, were as free from coal-dust as any other class of worker. Differences in this respect are largely due to the individual. The girls usually wear a coarse apron while at work; with a shawl to protect their hair. Going to and from their work, they usually change the apron for a white one, so, it is said, that they might not be distinguished from factory workers - a practice which implies the comparative cleanness of the occupation. The physical objections relate to the work with the hutches. It is considered too arduous by some of those acquainted with the conditions. From time to time a wagon gets off the rails, and it has to be levered on. In replacing it, the girls have often to exert their utmost strength, and they are on these occasions liable to overstrain. On the other hand, as a class they are robust and healthy. This is largely due to the open-air nature of their employment, and to the muscular development afforded by the work. It was suggested in the course of the inquiry on this point that only girls robust to begin with would offer themselves for this employment. On the contrary, girls who were not strong had been known to begin work at the pits, and to have benefited physically in a marked degree as a result of their work. The work does not seem to impair their attractiveness, and their marriage prospects appear to be bright. In the case of one pit, it was stated that there had been four marriages of girls within the past six weeks. A point that may be noted is that they, almost without exception, marry in the mining class; and their social acquaintances are also almost entirely confined to mining families. Morally, the gravest of the charges brought against pithead employment for girls lies in the fact that they are brought into association with men - not in every case by any means - from whom they pick up an unbecoming looseness of speech. This feature is generally admitted; but there is also general testimony to the fact that no substantial demoralisation results. The speech is a matter of habit and custom, and is merely superficial. As a class, it is freely admitted the pithead girls are well behaved. Reliable authorities consulted on this point in the Fifeshire district were unhesitating in their declaration to this effect.

#### Sociable Character Of The Work.

A veteran miner, who has been engaged in the pits all his life, drew attention to some features of the employment which have special attractions for the girls, but which are apt to be overlooked. One of these is the freedom and sociable character of the work. The girls work in company, and have full opportunity for conversation. A peculiar fact which this informant had noted was that it was exceedingly difficult to get women to work separately. Freedom to talk as they work seemed to be essential. Especially on a Monday, after the week-end's rest and new experiences the facilities for gossip appeared to be indispensable. In the factories, owing to the noise, conversation was carried on with difficulty; and was also discouraged by the overseers; and on that account the work suffered in amenity from the women's point of view. As a class, the pithead workers are lively and full of gaiety. A veteran observer stated that he had seen some of the girls in the exuberance of youthful spirits, interrupt their work to engage in a waltz.

Petitions are being promoted against the recommendation for the restriction of pithead female labour, and are being largely signed by the girl workers in the East of Scotland. While many agree that the work is not of the most desirable kind for girls, it is also recognised that we have not yet reached ideal conditions of existence. The general view is that the proposal is premature. If the conditions are unsuitable, with the general rise in the standard of life, the supply will diminish or cease; and in the meantime it is not considered to hamper the freedom of choice of employment in the manner proposed.

*West Fife Echo*  
*August, 1911*



## *COMPULSORY WASHING AT COLLIERIES*

Mr Thomas Ashton, secretary, has in name of the Executive Committee of Great Britain, issued a statement describing and criticising the far reaching proposals of the New Mines Bill providing for washing and drying accommodation. The statement proceeds: -

Objections which may arise are: - First - Its compulsory nature. Second - That men and boys would be likely to catch cold through washing at the mines. Third - That sufficient accommodation should be provided in the homes of miners to permit of thorough bathing being carried out there. Fourth - That it would take some time to wash and change clothing at the mine, and that this would keep the miners an additional time away from home. Fifth - That washing in public is strongly resented by British workmen, because of their innate modesty.

The answer to the first of these objections is that all mining legislation in interest of the general welfare of the whole body is compulsory. That all sanitary arrangements in connection with the workshop and the home is compulsory. That individuals in any case must surrender their own freedom in the interests of the general body. To the second objection the answer, is that the present system in which the men and lads leave the mine with their pit clothes in thousands of cases working in wet places, or wet because of perspiration caused by the heat of the mine, is a great deal more likely to cause them to take cold when they travel considerable distances from the mines to their homes, than could have possibly been the case if they had changed them at the mine, and gone home in dry clothes. In answer to the third objection, we may say that it is the desire of everyone who has the miners at heart, that the housing accommodation should be improved, but even if better houses were provided including bathrooms, this would only provide a stronger reason why the dirt of the mines should be left at the pit head, and not carried into the homes of the miners. Fourth - The time taken in washing and changing at the colliery would be considerably less than that which is now taken in the individual homes of the workmen, as better facilities could be provided collectively that can be secured in the average home. It is calculated that from ten to twenty minutes is all that is necessary for the washing and changing of even a very large number of workmen, where proper facilities are provided. Fifth - The question of washing in public need not be urged as a very strong objection, as the Clause of the Bill provides that the accommodation must be "sufficient and suitable", and this would naturally mean sufficient privacy to prevent any feeling of modesty being outraged.

Benefits received from the system of washing at the mines: - First- the comfort and freedom of cleanliness to the men and lads themselves. In many cases the workmen leaving the mine require to travel considerable distances to their homes, sometimes in trains or trams. In cold weather the suffering of workmen having to travel several miles

in what are usually no better than open cattle trucks, is intense. In many cases where the workmen are permitted to travel to and from their work by the ordinary tram system, they are made very uncomfortable by the feelings of disgust which are often openly displayed by their fellow passengers, who naturally object to the dirt which is the usual accompaniment of miners in their working clothes. Second - Perhaps the greatest blessing involved in the proposed changes would be conferred upon the wives and children of the miners. The average life on the miner's wife is one of continual drudgery, and the washing of the husbands and sons in the house and the drying and mending of the pit clothes, adds greatly to the labour and discomfort of the women in the homes. If the system of washing at mines became general for a few years, it may be taken for granted that the blessing conferred upon the women would be so enormous that they would never allow their husbands and sons to come home in their pit clothes.

This is not a safety clause in the ordinary sense of the term, but to those who have given the matter sufficient study, it is looked upon as one of the most important, from the health point of view, that is contained in the whole Bill. The benefit derived from this proposal would be felt directly, every working day, all the year round by about one million underground workers, and indirectly by about three times that number. Bathing and changing at the mines would raise the miners considerably in the estimation of the general public who, too often measures his worth by his appearance, but what is of far more importance it would give the miner a higher opinion of himself. It is regrettable to think that this proposal is giving rise to some objections in several mining districts, but this can only arise from the fact that the matter has not been fully considered. To secure this reform we must be united, and we appeal to the miners in every part of the British Coalfield to send forth a unanimous claim for the passing of Clause 77 in its entirety.

*The West Fife Echo*  
*October, 1911.*

*SIXTY-FIVE YEARS A MINER.*

EARLY REMINISCENCES OF WELLWOOD  
AND DUNFERMLINE

Sixty-five years of working in the mines and yet working every day at present, surely forms a record from the ordinary. Yet Mr William Penman, Cowdenbeath, the subject of this article, who has this long spell of useful labour to his credit, and for still performing the duties of underground manager at the Aitken Pit, Kelty, bears his years well and looks as young as many men of fifty years. Of a genial nature, Mr Penman willingly complied with a representative of the "West Fife Echo". to give an account of his interesting carer.

"I was born", he began, "in one of the late Mr Spowart's cotter houses between Wellwood and Dunfermline, what we called the West Porter Lodge, at the home of my grandfather. My father was a miner, and about the time when I was born there was trouble among the miners at Wellwood, and there was a strike. Some blacklegs had come to the place and my father was supposed to be blacklegging, with the result he was chased out of Wellwood - a rather forcible procedure - and he went to stay at Kelty. My mother had gone to Dunfermline to make some errands, when she was taken ill and taken to her father's house, where I was born. I have been told that my acquaintance with the pit commenced very early, as that I was taken in a cradle to the pit, and my mother, who used to draw the coals for my father, used to have a double duty, drawing hutches and rocking me.

"When I was eight and a half years of age I went to work at the Waterloo pit, which was situated between Wellwood and Dunfermline, one of the pits of the Elgin Colliery, but now long since disused. My first duty was to keep a trap door in an air course at the handsome wage of sixpence per day."

"What were the average miners wages then?"

"Well, about 2s 6d to 3s per day; but they had a free house, and commodities were much cheaper.

"I suppose the Truck system would be in vogue then. Was it really a bad system?"

"Deed, and it wisna a guid yin," answered Mr Penman.

In explaining the system Mr Penman said that the miners in need of provisions went to the colliery manager for a line for perhaps 5s or 10s. This was given and taken to the colliery store, and goods given to that value. They had to take the full value of the line, never getting any change back, and the amount was, of course, kept off the wages. If boots or clothing were required another line was obtained from the manager, and this line

was taken to a shop and so much kept off each pay till it was paid up, and something like a sixpence or a shilling per pound was charged for interest on the money. “We could not go to any shop we liked. I mind we had to go to Thomas Morrison’s in Bruce Street for boots. Of course, if a miner let his money lie until the end of the fortnight, he could buy where he liked, and a good many, like my father, did that.”

“The pits then were from forty to sixty fathoms deep, and the Waterloo, with the Wallsend near by, were the first pits to have slides for cages. Previous to that the hutches were just hauled up by chains, and I remember of my father having to stand up in the hutch at mid shaft and guide the other hutch off us. The haulage power was an atmospheric engine, an upright rod forced up with steam, and forced back with the usual atmospheric pressure, there being a tank of water for condensing the steam. In frosty weather, when the water got froze, we were stuck for water to condense the steam. With that and the single steam engine, there was neither brake, indicator, or any other of these modern appliances.” Continuing, Mr Penman said that he wrought in the Waterloo until he was twenty years of age, doing all kinds of work in the pit, having been sent to the coal face at 12 years of age, and doing what is now a man’s work.

“What was the daily output of coal, and how did you get it to the coast?”

“The output would be about 140 tons, a big difference to the Aitken with its 3000 tons. It left the pit in wagons drawn by horses till coming to Rumblingwell, Dunfermline, it was let down a decline. It was then taken to Pittencreeff Street to another decline, and so on by horse and by endless ropes down declines till it was at last at Charlestown Harbour. Of course there was a big land sale. I used to,” Mr Penman continued, “help to keep the air courses clear between the Waterloo and Leadsid Pit, one that I see Mr Drysdale has again opened up. I remember well,” said Mr Penman with a laugh, “of an experience I had there. Two of us were busy making the air course bigger and we stayed too long, for our balloons went down and out our lamps went leaving us in the dark. We tried to feel our way but we got stuck and had to remain until the men on the pithead missed us and came to look for us. We were there from twelve o’clock on Monday till eight the next night - twenty hours.

“We worked the Dunfermline Splint, and Five Foot Seams at from forty to sixty fathoms, the same seam at Cowdenbeath at about 200 fathoms and, in the East of Fife, very much deeper.

“How do you account for that ?”

“Oh, its just the rise and fall of the metal.”

“I suppose it will have been caused by upheavals ?”

“Yes,” he said, “the same as the dykes and the hedges all through Fife, and, as a rule, the coal all lies in a north-easterly direction. The coal crops out at one place near Dr Drysdale’s house, I have seen a seam at a burn there. These things are not easily explained,” he said, “Just look at the broad dyke that runs from Kelty at Cockley Farm to Lochgelly.”

Leaving the Waterloo pit Mr Penman commenced work at the Engine Pit, where the coal was very hard, the picks having to be sharpened as often as three times a day. “We were not allowed to use explosives either. It was not like the present time. All the coals had to be picked and I have seen a whole ship’s load of coal sent back from Charlestown because the captain saw the marks where the explosives had been used. Explosives did no harm as it is nearly all blown out nowadays, but they would not have it then.”

“There was no eight hour day for miners then. When I started at the pit, even when I was only nine years old, we commenced at four o’clock in the morning and did not get finished till four or five o’clock at night. So during the winter time we never saw daylight from Sunday to Sunday, except perhaps a holiday on pay Monday. My first position as oversman or underground manager was at the Prince of Wales Pit, between Townhill and Halketts Fauld, where there would be about 120 men in the pit.”

“What about gas?”

“Oh, there was gas there, but I only mind of two small explosions, and I was in them both, but if we had had the same ventilators as we have now we would never have noticed it. A short of furnace at the bottom of the shaft was our mode of ventilation to cause a draught.

“Some time after a few of us started a pit of our own at Glenraig in the year ‘66 or ‘67, and the result was we just lost our bawbees. We were working the gas coal there at about fourteen fathoms.”

“But did you not know that there was coal below, what the Glenraig Coal Company is at now?”

“We kent that fine, but our money was a’ dune, and the Wilson and Clyde Company are making the fortune we lost.

“I mind one day when we were taking our piece on the grass, Mr Symington of the Lochore Colliery and Mr Symington of the Lilliehill Brickwork came up to us and, after we had talked a while, Mr Symington asked if the Fife coal was not about that quarter, and they asked our opinion. I said that it was, but I could not tell them in what shape, but according to the geological formation of Fife, the coal was down at a distance of about 340 to 350 fathoms. Mr Symington lifted his hands in surprise and said, “It will never be

wrought.” I said, “Aye, it will be wrought; and it has been, and I have seen it very nearly exhausted.”

Mr Penman has been manager in collieries in Lanarkshire, Dollar, and in Cowdenbeath district, and is now in one of the most up-to-date colliers, the Aitken in Kelty, at the ripe old age of 73.

*West Fife Echo*  
*December, 1911*

*AS OTHER SEE US*

—  
THE COLLIER AND SPORT.  
—

An estimate of the character of these communities depends of course largely upon personal predilection. Superficially viewed the life seems grey and squalid enough, and the ready patronage of tavern and sporting field makes the solemn grieve. Environment has much to do with social habit, and the environment of the miner is not conducive to the cultivation of the finer social graces which seem so small but mean so much. His daily wear is much worn and dusty raiment, and he carries an oil lamp in his cap. That signifies much. Critics with creased trousers have not always understanding, and when they expect culture and a keen sense of devotion in the miner they betray a poor quality of observation. The miner, after all, is largely a creature of his environment, and in his social tastes he inevitably reflects the influence of the pit. In his hours of ease, he is a good fellow, intelligent in a practical sort of way. He will talk illuminatingly on the science of mining, and the more ambitious of his class will be found to be eager students in the technical school of Cowdenbeath, an increasingly flourishing institution. He is not aesthetically inclined. Fine art finds its expression for him in the unrestrained pigments of the grocer's calendar or in the more subdued steel engraving. And being honest in his appreciation he is none the worse for his limitations. Set a repertory theatre in his midst, and he would scorn it by deserting it. On the other hand he flocks to the picture house, where he may find actualities pictorially expressed, and when a pictorial whippet rushes over the screen he is enthusiastic. That is particularly so in Cowdenbeath, where whippet racing has become the supreme sport. Meetings are periodically held, at which, unfortunately, the gambling spirit is manifest. About a score of bookmakers and their attendant trains descend upon Cowdenbeath on these occasions, and undoubtedly such gatherings and such visitations have not improved the social life of Cowdenbeath. The better class of miner taboos the whippet course and deplores its increasing popularity. And in the "Raws" of Kelty the whippet is the subject of lamentation.

Old And New.

Whippet racing is a recent innovation in the "Kingdom". The rapid development of the Fifeshire coalfield has resulted in an invasion from the West. Native labour was inadequate to meet the demand, and miners from Lanarkshire, the Lothians, and Ayrshire have drifted to the pits of Fife, particularly to the Cowdenbeath area. With the Westerner came the whippet. The sport was unknown in Cowdenbeath until about five years ago, and since then it has proved a serious competitor with the less exciting but purer conflicts on the quaiting pitch. The evil has spread to the Cowdenbeath fringe. Lumphinnans seeks relief from the dreariness of its communal life by interesting itself in the whippet, but Lochgelly holds particularly aloof. A whippet race never results in a greater muster

of more than 200 Lochgelly men. But Lochgelly is an exclusive place, and somewhat sensitive on the subject of Cowdenbeath. It was a considerable place and had a history in mining when Cowdenbeath was a village, and communally relieves its feelings by contemptuously describing the greater town as “a mushroom which has now stopped growing.” In Lochgelly also it is claimed the miners are Fifers to a man, who mostly seek recreation in flinging the quoit or in the ennobling game of golf. As a mining community, Lochgelly is conservative, and rather irritated by the “aliens” on her Cowdenbeath and Lochore borders. In the latter place there are a number of Northumbria miners, and they also are addicted to the whippet. Lochgelly is rather nervous about the increasing influence of her neighbours in the new sport, which threatens the popularity of her quoiting and her golf. The general impression gained by conversation and observation in this district of Fifeshire is that the “invaders” are not proving a healthy influence. They have not only been “a corrupting influence in sport” (the phrase is a Fifeshire miner’s of the old school), but they have injuriously affected the social character of the “Raws”. They are said to be less thrifty, less tidy, in their home life, and less seemly in behaviour. Their presence is especially perturbing to the rows of Kelty and Bowhill. There, is anywhere, are to be found the patriarchal families of mining Fifeshire; douce folk, whose hearths shine, sober living and church going; provident folk also, many of them owning their own houses and other property besides. In Kelty at least the old type is still supreme, and their vitality, which suggests prudent living, was reflected on a recent occasion, when 40 veterans, not a man of them under 70 years of age, and one at least older, attended the burial of a comrade. But they were not whippet racers.

*“West Fife Echo”  
August, 1913.*



*LOCHORE MEADOWS.*

A RECLAMATION SCHEME.

(To the Editor.)

Sir, - Why should the cry of "back to the land" be so much confined to the Highlands of Scotland. Let us look around us in some parts of Fifeshire, and see the hundreds, aye even thousands of acres of land not under cultivation, in some parts so long out of cultivation that the grass has become soggy and choked, and therefore not even in good condition for grassing. There are some parts before a farmer can guide a plough through them he must call to his aid the skill of the engineer. Let us take one example to-day, where the power of the engineer would meet with success. I refer to the flat-lying grounds of Lochore Meadows.

What is know of Lochore Meadows and that part of Blairmill which lies to the west, were at one time covered by a sheet of water, known as Inchgall Loch. About the year 1800, an attempt was made by Captain Park, who owned Lochore Estate, to drain this loch. The Captain's aim was to improve the property by reclaiming so much land. He was a practical man, and thought if he had more land, and therefore more crops, it would be an advantage to him. At a cost of one thousand pounds he lowered the bed of the lead from the loch, and made a cutting through the loch in a westerly direction, past the castle, to where Kelty burn flowed in. The attempt was to some extent successful, as it took the large sheet of water away, but it by no means drained the land, as in rainy seasons yet the meadows are covered with water. The only returns these meadows give are a few pounds yearly from the coarse hay which is sold. What is wanted in the first place to make those grounds suitable for the plough is drainage - plenty drains, and all swift running ones, as they are apt to get choked up with vegetation. As I mentioned previously, the meadows are very flat, and to drain them would mean a few hundred pounds, but the benefits would be likewise great.

What ought to be done first, is to widen the present bridge at Lochore Road, or make another culvert, as the present bridge is too narrow. The waters in their run through it rise too high, thereby shortening the fall for the waters of the meadows. If a new culvert was made the bed could be made lower, thereby giving a better fall for the waters of the "Grand Cut." The speed of the water in the cut is too slow, hence the bed is easily silted up, thereby lessening the fall of the meadow drains. Another proposal is to sink a well about 40 feet deep, mid-way between Chapel Farm and Red Moss Wood, and all the drains from Harran Hill and the meadows made to enter into this well. Electric cables pass this point. An electric pump could be laid down and the collecting waters pumped to a reservoir made in the hollow near Cleikum Inn, from where, after being purified,

Lochore could get plenty of water for Domestic purposes, provided a large reservoir was made. Better water could be obtained by collecting at a lower level than at present, and pumping to a level high enough for gravitation.

The drainage of the meadows is of present importance from a mining point of view, as when the surface water has plenty swift-running drains, the water finding its way underground is much less. Who knows but the working of the upper coal seams of the neighbouring pit may result in the Inchgall Loch being formed. - I am etc.,

*Windsor.*

*West Fife Echo  
March 1914.*

*IN TIME OF WAR.*

HOW LOCHGELLY IS AFFECTED.

Situated in the very heart of the West Fife mining industry, Lochgelly has attained to the position of a community of considerable size and importance. It differs from the ordinary collection of miners' rows, and boasts the possession of a Main Street, elegant private residences in considerable number, and commodious public buildings of much architectural beauty. Linked up as the community is by tram and railway with the prosperous centres of Cowdenbeath and Dunfermline, Lochgelly escapes the fate of remaining an obscure unknown mining village. As it now stands, Lochgelly presents all the features of the average type of town to be discovered in all parts of the country while it still retains, although in a manner hidden from the general gaze, those characteristics peculiar to the Scottish mining community. The stereotyped rows of cottages flanked by the well-known patches of "drying greens," studded with clothes poles, around which innumerable children and nearly as many dogs of all varieties play and fight the whole day long, while the miners wives carry out their household duties and gossip together round the doors of the houses, are to be found not very far from the principal shopping centres. From any eminence can be seen dotting the whole countryside the tall black winding apparatus, with the accompanying buildings, chimneys, and "bings," marking the spots where the miners of Lochgelly descend into the earth and by the sweat of their brows, attended by much personal danger, earn sufficient to enable them and their families to exist in a state of comparative comfort. But Lochgelly depends on these pits for its very existence as a community, and thus it follows that anything concerning the work at the collieries has a direct effect upon the prosperity or reverse of the whole of the community.

Miners as a body do not waste their earnings, but there is a considerable proportion of improvements, and many wives delight rather to follow the fashions than swell the bank book. Large families of young children are peculiar to such communities, and a combination of both circumstances explain the fact that one week after the pits had gone on short time following the war, a cry of distress arose, and relief agencies had immediately to be at work. The collieries at that time were reduced to less than two days per week - indeed in several work ceased altogether, while a large number of the breadwinners were also away. Since then the distress, which was in several cases acute, has been relieved through the efforts of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families' Association, the receipt of separation allowance, and an improvement in the working hours. Lochgelly miners as a body work chiefly in the pits, ten in number, belonging to the Lochgelly Iron and Coal Company, and at present time the men are working on an average five days per week - nearly a normal condition of affairs. Nearly 1000 men have left Lochgelly as reservists, Territorial and recruits, and it is a curious fact that most of these are married men - a circumstance which in some measure explains the distress. The

effects of the war in this direction are by no means disposed of, and the S. and S.F.A. last month disbursed sixty pounds in relieving 72 cases of distress.

The tradesmen like their brethren in every other quarter are naturally feeling the economic effects of the strife. The grocers find that there is a disposition on the part of the customers to hold up money, and while at the outset the provision merchants were hard hit they now declare that trade is easier. It is, however, very difficult to obtain supplies, especially of eggs, butter and sugar, and there has been an advance of from 15 to 20 per cent. on the wholesale prices of these goods. The retailers cannot advance the price of necessities more than five per cent. to customers so it follows that they are experiencing a substantial reduction in profits. This has to be considered along with the fact that there is at least a decrease in turnover of 20 per cent. The trade in a community of the nature of Lochgelly may be roughly divided into two kinds - cash or credit or "book". The cash trade, while experiencing a distinct decrease, is fortunate in having money in hand for goods sold, while the "book" trade merchants carry on business at a risk. Indeed accounts are being run up which will not be settled until the end of the war (and probably not even then), while accounts incurred before the war cannot possibly be ingathered at present.

Bakers are little affected by the course of events in so far as actual business is concerned, and the only complaint that they have to make is that materials are dearer in consequence of the difficulty experienced in their exportation. Bread cannot well be increased in price so that the bakers like the grocers are foregoing a percentage of profits. The bootmakers are chiefly affected by the increased price of leather, especially in heavy materials, necessitating a large increase in the price of pit boots, etc. Some of them were fortunately in possession of fairly large stocks and do not just at present feel the effect of the demand for leather by the armies of the Allies, as they will later in the season. There ought to have been at this time quite a considerable trade in fancy footwear, but this has practically disappeared and the turnover at Christmas and New Year will be a mere nothing compared with former years. The trade is of the opinion that matters will get worse instead of better as time goes on and that the worst will come after the New Year. The Co-Operative Society is in the happy position of being able to record an increase, and seeing that this flourishing institution claims nearly 80 per cent. of the total trade of the town this is very satisfactory. The increase for the quarter to the beginning of September amounts to one thousand, one hundred and ninety-seven, pounds three shillings, and ninepence, over the corresponding quarter of last year. Fully half of this is accounted for by the surplus in the grocery department, while the other progressing sections are the bakery, butchery, millinery, dressmaking and shoemaking departments - the increase in the last three named being comparatively small. The backsliding departments are the drapery, boot and shoe (sales), crockery and furniture, fruit and fish, and tailoring, and the Society on the whole is a very fair index of the condition of trade throughout the town.

The savings of the people in such a crisis are a fairly reliable reflex of the state of affairs, and in this connection it has to be reported that a decrease falls to be recorded. As yet the decrease is not such as to cause alarm, although many may in future have cause to bless the fact that they have a little sum "put by" for a "rainy day". The churches have been doing their duty in the present state of affairs and have organised the manufacture and despatch of bodily comforts for the troops. The attendance has been materially affected by the crisis - in a good direction - and the last Communion Service held in the Parish Church (about a fortnight ago) was the most largely attended service in the history of the church. Despite the fact that a large number of the departed soldiers were church goers, attendance and income show decided increases. Another affect of the crisis is the quietness of the streets at all times of the week - due chiefly of course to the exodus of the male population - and it is also a subject of gratification that the Police Court has been very largely affected. Indeed there is a decrease of over 50 per cent. in the petty crimes and drunkenness inseparably associated with such communities.

The increase or decrease of the work at the pits belonging to the Lochgelly Iron and Coal Company is after all the deciding factor in the situation. Should these pits stop work immediately, the keenest distress will result - it being a curious circumstance that the greatest proportion of the men who have left the town are married. In this respect the company can forecast nothing. Their trade is largely of the export variety, and should anything prevent the free passage of the coal to neutral ports their trade must assuredly cease and the pits be shut down. Indeed one cannot look forward even one week. The work, however, as already stated, is now more steady than at the outbreak. The Company have given one thousand pounds to the National Relief Fund, and one hundred pounds to the Belgian Relief Fund. In Lanarkshire and Stirlingshire the miners have imposed upon themselves a levy of 1d. Per shift where they get more than three shifts a week - the proceeds going towards the National Relief Fund. The Lochgelly Company made a similar proposal to their own men, but the miners held to the opinion that contributions should be voluntary and refused to accede. They indeed made one collection, but the amount raised was very small, and since then they have done nothing.

The following men connected with the district have been reported wounded: - Pte. William Reid, Russell Street, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders; Pte. R. Shand, Well Road, Black Watch; Pte. James Reid, Melgund Place, Black Watch; Pte. Joseph Thomson, Temple Place, Gordon Highlanders; Pte. Charles Carruthers, Henderson Street, Cameron Highlanders; Pte. Richard Heath, Melville Street, Black Watch; Pte. James Falconer, Grainger Street, Cameron Highlanders. Besides it has been notified that Pte. Robert Bolt, Mid Street, Cameron Highlanders, has been killed. On Monday Mrs Scott, Mid Street, received a parcel from the base hospital in France containing the badge from her husband's cap, his book, watch, and other articles, but no intimation of his death has as yet been received. Lance Corporal David Scott was serving in the Black Watch, and has been in the fighting line from the start. It has also been reported that Pte. Michael Lee, Lumphinnans Road, has been killed. Pte. David Mollison is reported missing.

*“West Fife Echo”*  
*November, 1914*

*“A Wee Keek Back”*

*IN TIME OF WAR.*  
(By Our Special Commissioner.)

No V.

LOCHORE, GLENCRAIG, AND CROSSHILL.

Lochore, Glencraig, and Crosshill, constitute one of those localities in West Fife where the interests are centred wholly in the mining industry and the life and prosperity of the whole community is linked with the coal trade. The villages merge into one another and form a long ragged extended line, running from Lochgelly into the open country. The total population of the community is somewhere near the figure of 5,000 men, women, and children, and out of that number nearly 500 miners have answered the call of duty.

The workmen in the neighbourhood are divided principally between two collieries - Glencraig and the Mary - those residing in Glencraig finding employment in the former, and the latter sufficing for the needs of the Lochore men. From Glencraig over 200 men have joined the colours, the number being a little less than that of the Lochore and Crosshill miners. A curious fact which one discovers over practically the whole of West Fife District is that the greater portion of the whole men enlisted are married men who have left behind them families of fairly large dimensions. It naturally follows that there must be a considerable amount of distress and the agencies at work trying to alleviate the poverty and misery due to the war, have a very busy time. The principal burden in this respect has fallen upon the Soldiers' and Sailor's Association, who have filled the gap until the receipt by dependants of separation allowances. This Association has to date relieved over two hundred cases of distress and many instances could be cited where the misery has been very acute indeed.

The collieries in the district have so far continued to give regular employment. Glencraig Pit has only lost four shifts since the outbreak of hostilities, although it may be mentioned that owing to cessation of trade with Germany the anthracite section of the colliery has had to be suspended. In Lochore the Mary Pit is now working single shift instead of double shift, but the work is plentiful, and many miners from Lochgelly and other districts have flocked in to take the places of those who have gone to the front. This abundance of work is reflected in several ways in the effects of the war upon the district. The regularity of employment is having the effect of keeping many from joining the colours, who otherwise would from force of circumstances have been more inclined to do so. The effect is most strongly felt when the officials come to deal with cases of distress. The miners have long been accustomed to large pays in times of prosperity. They have lived in a state of comparative affluence. They allowed themselves to want for nothing that money could procure for them, and earning a wage that many a professional man cannot command they have unfortunately lived to the full extent of their income and for them the wisdom of saving for a rainy day did not exist. Even in times of prosperity a slack week or fortnight found them pulling their waist belt a little tighter. Thus it comes

*“A Wee Keek Back”*

about, that many wives - young and old - are most improvident and cannot spend a pound to the full advantage; the habit of thrift is totally unknown to them, and in the present circumstances when money is scarce and food dear, they cannot break away from former habits and inclinations. This may appear to be a sweeping indictment, but it is unfortunately only too clearly proved by the investigations made in regard to cases of distress. Examples innumerable could be cited. One woman with three of a family had a weekly income from the government of 24s. and still she found reason to complain that she could not make ends meet. Another woman was given a ticket enabling her to get goods to the value of 5s. from a grocer, and with that ticket she procured only four articles, and these articles the best of everything.

Shortly after the outbreak nearly fifty per cent. of the total number who have enlisted left the district and immediately the wives began to make calls upon the pawnbroker, and article by article the furniture of the homes began to disappear. The officials in charge of the schemes for alleviating distress when they learned of such cases called upon the parties and endeavoured by small supplies of money to make up the leeway. In other cases they attempted by a little homely counsel to make the women understand that plainer and cheaper food would be the best policy until more money was available, but to little purpose. The wives of the absent men took up the attitude that the advice was not required or would not be listened to. One woman who was complaining about hard times could only stare when informed that many a good strong health-giving plate of soup was made from marrow bones. The women themselves do nothing to help, but simply sit at home and wait for the arrival of the separation allowance.

Of course, it must not be imagined for a moment that these allegations are directed against the whole of the miners' wives in the district. There are quite a number of frugal thrifty women who are willing to scrape and save in order to make ends meet at this critical time, but unfortunately that type of wife is in a decided minority. It is a curious fact that the most of such cases come from Lochore, and in that village also the charitable organisations found the widest field for their labours. Indeed there is a vast difference between the communities of Glenraig and Lochore. In the former the miners are of a settled, steady disposition, men who have lived in the district for many years, and worked in the same colliery all their life. In Lochore, on the other hand the bulk of the population is composed of a most migratory class of miner - here today and away tomorrow. There is even a striking difference between the style of houses which compose the two villages. Those in Glenraig are more substantially built, much more cleanly in their appearance than the dirty brick built rows which form the biggest part of Lochore. There is in existence, also in the community, as doubtless in many others, a system of co-operation in the buying of goods. One woman will obtain a credit book guaranteeing payment of all the goods she receives. Thus it happens that when money is scarce she cannot clear her book and is refused goods, this step affecting probably three or four families who, not being in sufficient ready cash cannot obtain goods elsewhere, thus causing starvation and distress. This practice is carried out unknown to the officials



of the Co-operative Institution. Those responsible for the S. and S.F.A. allowances have also been troubled by many claims, which on enquiry, were proved not to be genuine.

Owing to the large number of married men who have left the district work is being delegated to unmarried and comparatively young men who are thus finding themselves with considerable increased incomes. Quite a number of the young miners in Fife instead of being like sons in a house are rather in the light of lodgers paying a fixed sum to their parents in lieu of board and lodgings. This allowance may have been in several cases increased, but the young men still retain a considerable sum to be disposed of as they please. There exists in most mining communities an element of gambling - pitch and toss, whippet racing, and such like - and in these forms of sport a large number of the young men find ample outlet for wasting their wages. The police authorities say that while there are many men away the drinking and petty crimes go on as usual. It is only forbearance in taking proceedings against some sole remaining breadwinners that preserve the Court returns from being much the same as usual.

It will thus be seen that considering the whole circumstances the large pays of the miners have in the existing state of affairs become a disadvantage rather than a benefit and only such circumstances as those arising out of the present war will have the effect of teaching the wasteful women and men frugality and thrift. It is probably a hard oppressive method, but nevertheless needful. The shopkeepers in this district complain along much the same lines as those in all other communities. Glencraig is the principal shopping centre and here the grocers, bakers, and butchers have reason to deplore a decrease in turnover of almost 25 per cent., while at the same time there is a great increase in the price of material - particularly baking material, while at the same time the retailers cannot increase the rates to consumers. The people are in other ways doing something to help the men at the front, and a fairly large quantity of garments have been dispatched.

The coal trade is naturally the key to the whole situation. Should work cease there must immediately follow a period of acute distress when the separation allowance given by the Government will not be sufficient to keep the wolf from the door. At present the work is plentiful, but the colliery authorities cannot prophesy as to the future. They are, however, doing what they can, and are allowing dependants of men at the front free rent and coal. These men on the other hand refused, as in other parts of the country, to agree to a levy on their wages towards the National Relief Fund. On the whole the community is likely to suffer acutely as time goes on.

*The Dunfermline Journal*  
November 21st, 1914

*IN TIME OF WAR.*

COWDENBEATH.

Cowdenbeath, the second town in point of importance in West Fife, owes its existence entirely to the mining industry. To-day it is a thriving industrial centre with every improvement to be found in a town of its size. What is necessary, for its further expansion, is the development of a new industry - ironfounding, linen weaving, or the likes.

The town being one where all classes of miners are to be found has sent a very representative band of men to do service for the country in the present crisis. Although something between 1200 and 1500 men have enlisted for the town and district. A goodly proportion of the men are unmarried, but the district in common with practically the whole of the West Fife has sent quite 50 per cent. of married men to the front and to various parts of the country. It is not to be expected that such a number of individuals can be subtracted from a comparatively small community without the result being evident to the outsider. While the total stranger might be deceived, anyone with the slightest knowledge of Cowdenbeath High Street at night could not fail to be struck by the marked thinning of the male population. It has also to be noted in this respect that the class of men who are now absent was exactly the type of young man who frequented the streets during his leisure hours.

Anything affecting the staple industry immediately reacts upon the lives of the inhabitants. There are many pits in and around Cowdenbeath (in which districts must be included Lumphinnans and Hill of Beath), and the following figures give an idea of the disposition of the miners through the various collieries: - Lumphinnans Colliery employees 1600 men; Mossbeath, 425; Hill of Beath, 500; Kirkford, 700; Cowdenbeath, 330; Little Raith, 850; Fordell, 500; and the remainder about 600. In all there are, roughly speaking, 5000 men, and in only one Pit, Kirkford, or No. 10, as it is called, have the miners been working full time. Indeed, for a week or two after the outbreak of hostilities the mines stood practically still, but conditions have improved and on an average four days per week are now being obtained. This naturally means a very considerable drop in the weekly income. A number of the men have little opportunity and probably as little inclination to save money, and consequently when the income drops by nearly fifty per cent. there is a decided pinch. Luxuries have to be done without and a lower standard of living is enforced. The families are accustomed to a high level of domestic comfort, and when the present conditions abate they will naturally return to that standard.

The number of men away has had its disadvantages, but it may also be said that the men at home are benefiting to some extent in respect that there is more work to be done by

less men. Indeed, four days per week is not to be grumbled about, and should the average not be lowered, for there is little hope of it being raised, the community will not be greatly affected. Those remaining have simply had to suit themselves to circumstances. The distress has not been so prevalent in Cowdenbeath as it has been in other districts, and in the majority of cases “pinch” instead of “distress” would describe the real state of affairs.

Consequently there has been a wide field for operation of an institution such as the Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Families’ Association and good work has been done in easing the financial strain and assisting necessitous cases where the breadwinners are away. There is a disposition on the part of the outsiders to look upon the distribution of such money as charity, but it must be remembered that it is not charity. The funds of such associations are being liberally fed from the National Relief Funds and the Government are simply removing the evil created by their delay in settling separation allowances. The assistance given in Cowdenbeath district has been marked by systematic regularity so different from the style in some places, where a number of bountiful ladies dole out pittances at irregular intervals and succeed in accentuating rather than dissipating the distress.

In regard to recruiting it has to be said that in the light of the returns from other towns, Cowdenbeath has done its duty, but there are still a large number of eligible unmarried men who would find it difficult to give a reason why they should not enlist. Cowdenbeath men should look to themselves and show an example instead of seeking for an excuse. No blame either can be attached to the recruiting official or the local authorities both of whom have carried out schemes innumerable and held various meetings in an attempt to persuade the young men to recruit. While the response has been gratifying it could be better, and the apathy which appears to have set in must be dispelled.

Food is, of course, much dearer, and the merchants of all grades are feeling the effects of the struggle keenly. There is, however, nothing peculiar in their condition apart from their brethren all over the country and tradesmen and miners alike look with hope to the future.

*“West Fife Echo”  
December, 1914.*

*COMMUNISM RESISTED  
AT LUMPHINNANS.*

Striker's Novel Project for  
Working of Seam.

Communism is to receive a trail at Lumphinnans, that form of Sovietism having been introduced into the working of an outcrop seam which was discovered on Friday in the Games Park, leased by the Games Committee. Over the weekend operations were carried out with a great deal of enthusiasm, the exposed seam yielding splendid splint coal, and being a tempting sight to thousands of visitors attracted to the scene.

By Monday, many tons of coal had been taken away by two horse-drawn vehicles, when the crash to private enterprise came in the form of an edict from the local Miners' Union to the effect that the seam was to be worked on communistic lines. A deputation conveyed this information to the workers, the scheme providing for the coal to be removed to a central depot and delivered to soup kitchens and families in the village whose supplies had run out.

Many of the prospectors had just struck the coal and they were against this form of "autocratic democracy", while other "owners" protested that their schemes already in operation provided for part of the output going to the soup kitchen.

The protests, however, were in vain. Following a refusal on the part of the workers to give up the ownership, a number of the miners of the village marched down in force and commandeered the "colliery". Arguments and protestations were given vent to for over two hours, until after meetings between the disputants, arrangements were come to whereby the new form of communism was to be tried.

The names of all the available men of the village were noted, and four shifts per day were arranged for the different working places. Some men were detailed for transport work, while to others was allocated the task of distribution.

Subsequently the names of those in need of coal were taken, and after an inspection was made of the cellars, supplies of coal will be delivered.

*The West Fife Echo  
May 11, 1921.*

*COMMUNISM OF A KIND.*

A visit to the communistic colliery at Lumphinnans last Tuesday revealed that considerable progress had been made since the previous day. All the workings were closed but two, and these were being worked on a thorough business-like principle. At six o'clock when work finished, an "Echo" representative was taken down one of the mines, and what strikes one is the workmanship finish of the undertaking. The roofs and sides are supported in the orthodox fashion, making it quite safe for working in. The seam was followed a distance of about thirty feet, and the pit only required rails and hutches to make it an everyday mine. The men who had just finished a shift were standing looking on, and on inquiry they all stated that the scheme adopted was received with entire satisfaction.

One of the officials who was present said the scheme of communistic control was a great success. When they took over the undertaking they first of all stopped the work and formed a working committee. This committee got to work and devised the present method of getting the coal, and when this was done they decided to first of all apply for voluntary workers, and they came forward in plenty. Three shifts were then arranged and twelve men selected for each shift for each place, so that seventy-two men were engaged daily, and there were enough volunteers to ensure that no man worked two days on end.

Transport was then engaged to remove the coal and a commencement was made. When the coal was taken to the village it was handed over to the men in charge of distribution who had previously went round the village and taken stock of the supply each household possessed, and the coal was distributed in proportion to the requirements and the quantity in stock. The coal was delivered to each household and no charge is made for the mineral, the supply being judged on the needs of the family, not on the ability to pay. No one is paid for his labour beyond receiving his ration of coal the same as the widow who has no husband to take his share of the work. Oh yes, there are "gaffers". There are always three men on the top guiding operations, while there is always an official of the Union on the scene. The people of Lumphinnans are quite happy over their introduction into Communism or, as some called it, Bolshevism, and whatever objections may be taken to the principle on a large scale as applied to a village composed of miners and confined to the production of coal, it is favourably received.

A short distance away, but over the railway, a number of Cowdenbeath miners were at work on an outcrop seam discovered on Saturday, but here there is a vast difference, for each clique are working at their own place and taking away their coal in bags, and when each man has had enough to stock his cellar, he quits in favour of another man. The result is of method there is little in comparison to the Socialist undertaking over the way.

*The West Fife Echo  
May 18, 1921.*

*IDLENESS AT FIFE PITS,*

A DEPRESSING SPECTACLE.

A special "Bulletin" commissioner has been visiting the Fife Coalfields and has reported on the conditions prevailing in the villages:-

There is a deserted village in Fifeshire today; a village not deserted by the inhabitants, but utterly deserted by employment. Two hundred families live in the village and not a penny of earned income is entering their brick cottages. This village was discovered last Monday by the commissioner who is making enquiries into the distress among the mining communities in the ancient county of Kings. Its name is Saline, and it nestles in isolation beside the foothills from which it takes its name. Lethans and Upper Steelend are its suburbs, which were built by the colliery owners. Formerly it derived its livelihood from a local pit which has now been shut down. There is no other form of employment; that pit, the winding engine of which has not snorted for months, was the source of life for that little hamlet.

The Empty Houses.

Before the stagnation descended upon the coalfield, the colliery company erected a modern village at one of the suburbs. But to-day the houses stand tenantless; the old houses and the old rents are good enough for the workless. Besides, the young people of Saline, who might have married and lived in these new houses, are scattered in search of work; nor can they marry. Dunfermline, where Robert the Bruce lies buried, the fortunate town upon which Carnegie showered his bounties, is six miles away. On Monday the road was icebound and treacherous.

Three hundred men and boys trudge the twelve miles there and back once or twice a week to report to the Labour Exchange and to draw the "dole". There is a 'bus service, but the 'bus fares bite too deeply into the meagre sum already too heavily mortgaged for precious food. They say wistfully that there is still a skeleton staff at the Saline Pit, and that perhaps it will open soon.

Thirty Per Cent. Idle.

There is a desolation at the heart of Fife. Above that great belt of carboniferous limestone into which men have burrowed for coal, the great belt that sweeps south of the Paps o' Fife, across from Dunfermline to Leven, there are many towns and villages that mirror the misery of Saline. To-day nearly 30 per cent. of the miners of Fife are unemployed. Twenty thousand men, women, and children are dependent on the "dole"

or parish relief. The wreckage of the coal expert trade is strewn visibly over what King James once truly called the golden fringe of the beggar's mantle. Like South Wales, Fife has gone down with the exports.

In the name of nationalisation it is said that more labour-saving machinery has been installed in the Fife pits during the past two years than the total amount previously implanted since the mines were mechanised. One man now digs as much as four did previously; the other three cannot be absorbed, and probably will never be again. Pits are closed down for all time; the watchman stands at many of the others - until when?

#### A Harbour For Sale.

Saturation point has been reached in the Fife pits in the present conditions of trade. Everywhere one goes there is a staggering percentage of workless. There are 2000 in Cowdenbeath and Lumphinnans; 1000 in Lochgelly.

The little seaport of Dysart, on the Forth, which is now trying hard to get rid of a harbour which once taxed the purse strings of the Common Good with coaling dues, has about 500, Wellesley, at one time the scientific last word at the street corners, is only working some seams. The Michael, a household word up to the East Neuk, producing no more coal. And so on, wearisomingly.

And those who are working - are they better placed than their mates on the parish? A little perhaps. But I quote what I am assured is a common example of to-day's earnings in the Fife mines.

#### Remarkable Pay-Sheet.

This is the week's pay-sheet of a coal-hewer and his boy. They are working in Kingseat. The miner, who is now 65, has been in the pits from the age of 12. After all deductions the wages of this man and boy are two pounds two shillings and eleven and a half pence. From this has been deducted State insurance at 1s 6d for health and 10 and a half pence for unemployment, 6d for medical attendance, 2d for pick-sharpening, 2s 10d for explosives, 2d for the Institute, and 2d for a convalescent home subscription. From little more than two guineas earned by the man and boy a rent of six shillings has yet to be paid. The rest is for living.

#### Joe Corrie's Story.

"The Bulletin" representative continued his narrative last Wednesday. "To-day" he says, "I saw the catastrophe of Fifeshire through the eyes of a dramatist. As an escape from the nausea of sordid industrial facts, I turned gladly to the lives of men. My interpreter was Joe Corrie, the miner-playwright. His hands are still marked with the callusing pick;

his pit earning kept his household for eight months when the rest of the family was idle; he knows.

“It was a story for the dramatist to tell. In it there are laughter and tears; laughter through the tears and tears through the laughter; just humanity, tragic but not macabre.

“Joe Corrie lives in Dundonald. As I climbed the brae from the railway station past a dead wood a steady procession of miners came trudging over the muddy road to join the backshift at Bowhill. The plight of Fife was in their faces; sallow complexions, and a lack of curiosity in their glance was significant.

“In the last cottage of a new housing scheme, many of the dwellings which are boarded up because the rents have proved too big for the collier, I found Corrie. He was eating his dinner. His mother sat by the fire in a kitchen which ribbons, cretonnes, and the industrious fingers of a woman had made beautiful.

“There is no social life at the back o’ Fife to-day,’ he told me, ‘It is wiped out. We all just live in the same era.’

‘People don’t drop into friends’ houses of a night as they used to. They are becoming sensitive; they don’t want to surprise a poverty which they know is there, but which is being concealed even from the eyes of neighbours.

“There are no concerts on Saturday nights now. The concerts died simply from inattendance. People haven’t the clothes for formal occasions.’

‘The cinemas are the only flourishing concerns in the coalfields. The miners’ families’, the playwright told me, ‘would rather have a sup less from the bowl and seek solace in the world of glittering unreality for two hours. And, besides, it is dark and concealing in the cinema.’

#### In Mother’s Shoon.

‘Scotland now knows that the miner is as wretchedly clad as he has been in History. Corrie told me that the wind whistles through their garments to the skin. ‘When duty brings the men out at night,’ he said, ‘they appear with their pit boots shined with blacking; they have only one pair in their possession.’

‘The women, having no shift, mostly remain indoors during the day; few women are to be seen in daylight in the streets of the mining villages. The children often shauchle along in their mothers shoon.’



‘I went into a house in Bowhill the other day,’ Corrie said to me. ‘The wife and mother were making the bed. There were only sheets on that bed, and I didn’t ask where were the blankets.’

### The Money Box.

“Talk veered round the Outram National Miners’ Fund.

‘If you want a gift for your fund, there it is’, said Corrie. He handed me a little money box made of varnished three-ply wood in the form of an old-fashioned kitchen dresser. ‘I give you that - and its story - for your fund’, he said.

‘There was a man in one of these villages’, the playwright told me, ‘and he was hurt in the pit. After convalescence, he was passed by the doctor for light work. There was no light work. In the weeks’ interval between the end of his compensation and the beginning of the dole he and his wife and family had neither food nor fuel.’

‘Sitting at home, he worked hard all through one night and made five of these little money-boxes out of a tea-case. His wife, with her boy at her heel, went round the neighbours and hawked them at ninepence each to scrape the means for a breakfast - not cringingly, but with a laugh on her lips.

‘She sold every one. Can you imagine it? Five house stricken with poverty spent ninepence each on a money-box to help out their kin. Isn’t it sublime irony and beautiful humanity?’

*The West Fife Echo*  
*December 26, 1928*

*PROPOSED PIT BATH.*

SCHEME OUTLINED FOR  
KINGLASSIE COLLIERY.

Mr John Ford, safety inspector, addressed largely attended meetings of the workers at Kinglassie Colliery last Thursday in connection with the proposal to install baths at the colliery. He said that the section of the Coal Mines Act which could compel the owners to install baths was practically dead because of the fact that the present cost of maintenance was higher than that permitted by the Act. Under the terms of the Mining Industry Act of 1926, however, provision was made for the collection by the Inland Revenue Department of a special levy of one shilling per pound of the Royalties derived from coal by the Miners' Welfare Committee. This fund has to be utilised in the meantime for the sole purpose of providing washing and drying accommodation at the pithead for the workers, and owners have to install them at every colliery in course of time, if found practicable. The owners were bound to provide and prepare a suitable site and to see that proper drainage facilities were given. They would also provide coal and light and, if baths were installed at the colliery, the cost to the workers was estimated at 4d per week for every worker. The buildings would be vested in four trustees - two representing the owners and two the workers employed.

The baths would be managed by a joint committee consisting of probably two representatives from either side along with the trustees.

The proposed installation would be on the lines approved by the Welfare Committee and he referred to model baths which had been recently installed at Broomside Colliery, Motherwell. The deputation which he took from Kinglassie to see those baths were very favourably impressed with the system, and he said that every man at the colliery was whole-heartedly in favour of the system. The men declared that they never would go back again to the old conditions and that the Welfare Committee had never spent money better.

A limited number of baths could only be erected in the meantime, and Kinglassie had been selected as a suitable colliery owing to the fact that many of the workers had to work under wet conditions, and a number of them had to travel long distances to get to and from the colliery.

In Motherwell, the system worked with clock-like regularity and practically every man used the baths. When the men came up from their shift, they went into the boots brushing room. The brushes, five in number, were operated by a small 5 h.p. motor, and the men just placed their feet on a pedestal and had all the dirt brushed cleanly off their boots. They then proceeded to an adjacent place where several sets of grease boxes were provided, and slightly greased their boots.

Afterwards they proceeded to the dirty clothes department, and there they stripped and left all their dirty working clothes, which were placed into a steam heated cubicle. Each cubicle was numbered, so that they could not be mistaken, and the clothes were always well dried and warmed. The men then entered the bath cubicles, which were on the shower principle, and the water could be heated to any temperature required. Generally ten minutes or so was occupied in bathing, and then they proceeded to the clean clothes department, where they dressed. All the clean clothes were placed in a separate cubicle, which was also aired and heated.

A feature of the baths at Motherwell, Mr Ford said, was the provision of a canteen where the men could have hot tea or coffee, cigarettes, etc., at reasonable prices, and this had proved to be a popular innovation. Those and other matters could be determined by the Management Committee if it was agreed to proceed with the erection of the baths.

After Mr Ford had answered several questions relating to various points, it was unanimously agreed at both meetings to take a ballot with a view of having the baths installed as early a date as possible.

*The West Fife Echo*  
*October 16, 1929.*

*KELTY FIFTY YEARS AGO.*

HOUSES AND THEIR TENANTS.

It may be of interest if the present generation had some idea of Kelty fifty years ago, and, with the hope that it may interest the young and revive the memories of the older people, I propose to give as near as my memory permits, a review of Kelty as it was when I first remembered the place.

I propose to commence with a walk from Bridge end Bridge and give the number of houses. As we proceed from the bridge, the first one is the one occupied by R. Stewart. Since that time an addition has been made by building a room to the west of the original cottage. I believe I am right in saying that most of the Stewart family were reared in this house, and it must have been occupied by the Stewarts for about fifty years.

Proceeding up the way we had old Pleasance to the right and the old farm buildings to the left, but on the North side of the Black Road. Two of the tenants I can remember, Alex Blair's grandfather and old Bob Black, the weighman.

On the West side we had a row of three houses and a cottage on the roadside (now the site of New Pleasance,) besides the rows still standing and known as Old Pleasance. Further on was a row of three houses, one of them occupied by old Willie Wyse, the motor driver's great-grandfather. My wife's granny resided in another and was the doctor's call-house, where, by the way, you were supplied with salts and senna, as well as pills, on being able to answer the questions asked. Adamsville is about the site of those cottages.

A little further up we had Clayhole, and on the East side, Earl's Row (six houses), and when I remember first Willie Penman, (who built Bauld's shop and started a newsagency there.) Fred, and another son, along with their father, stayed in the North or end house of this block. These have now been demolished, and new Earl's Row built upon the site. I can remember Railway Row being built, but Church Street on the right was unoccupied at that time, as well as the cottages presently occupied by John Butters. Turbayne's shop and a small public-house tenanted by one Robertson, were there, also Rowan Cottage on the east side of the road, and, when I remember, David Hynd, an oversman at the old pit, occupied this cottage.

Just immediately past the public-house were four cottages back from the road, occupied by Johnnie Houston's parents, and Peggy Shepherd. These are now demolished and Brown's Buildings occupy the site. Next fue was that occupied by John Irvine, at that time tenanted and owned by Geordie Duncan, Mrs John Irvine's Grandfather. Just across the Dewar's Road we had that house (still standing but not occupied) owned by Easie Gourley, a Mrs Brown. Dewar's Row (eight houses), owned by Robbie Dewar, and one

tenanted by him at that time, are now closed, but not demolished. The three rows were then in existence. Proceeding south we had the two houses known as Russell Rows, at that time as Baxter's Row, now demolished.

Next was Neil Baxter's licensed grocers, now and for some time past a bakers shop, and Swanley Cottage, where, I am informed, I was born. On the site of the Gas Manager's house we had three small houses, one of them occupied by John Martin, Mrs Alex. Cook's father. Just adjoining we had the old castle and the two houses quite recently demolished (and latterly occupied by Sandy Brown and another) to make way for road improvements. Old Keltyhead is still "just as you were", but it must be borne in mind that from Rowan Cottage to the Cross Roads, not one building then existed on the east side, and only the school for many years later. At Keltyhead we had Henry Penman's houses, but no collieries; then two old houses belonging to Allan Ireland, Bob and John Ireland's father.

The next fue and shops belonged to Tam Philp, he was called Snuffy Tam, a fue and house bought by my father 50 years ago. We then had a cottage, but not now seen, owned by old John Shaw, grandfather of the present John. From this on we next had the Braehead and no houses till we got to Irvine's Smithy. (There was no Croal Place), which was tenanted by John Irvine, who worked in the smithy and had a dairy. Old John was the present John Irvine's grandfather. Proceeding, we had just the smithy and house, two old houses known as Corpha, and it was from this house that Archie Beveridge's father-in-law got his bye-name to distinguish him from the other Penman's. The other house being occupied by Joe Henderson the tailor.

We are now at the Cross Roads, and from here in Cocklaw direction we may travel west, because from here to Kelty Station we had no houses on either side of the Station Road. Well we had Dick Hunter's public-house, a small place with a few rooms, now the site of No 2 Gothenburg. Just further on, and still on the right, we had Hunter's bakehouse and dwelling house, also a small house with an outside stair. Then we had Geordie Ramsay's house, a one storey place, and the old house and stable occupied by W. Fotheringham's father. This is now Rosewell Terrace. Drumsink houses, and the four facing the road were there at that time, the first house past the Rosewell Terrace being the Kelty Co-operative Society's premises. The house next the wood was occupied by Sebastian Rennie, Mrs Andrew Penman's father.

As this was the last house on this side let us go down and cross over to Frankie Fotheringham's house, which was only a one-storey cottage, then we had a house and stable occupied Tam Stenhouse, Jim's father. This was demolished and Galloway's Hotel built on the site. We come to the present barber's block, and before that we had a one-storey building adjoining the barber shop which was a dwelling house, and latterly a butcher's shop started by Dannie McArthur. In the barber's shop we had an old woman tenant Lizzie Gibson, who kept a shop and sold "black-man" lemonade, tobacco, etc. Above Lizzie Gibson's we had the policeman's house, and the first I can remember was

Tam Graham, Mrs Adgers father. Then we had Jamie Wilkie's joiner shop, next the Cross.

### Food Supply

It is just possible that our feeding at that period suited the other circumstances. Until I started to work, I rarely had tea. We had porridge and milk (sometimes treacle peery) for breakfast, and soup or kale for dinner, and potatoes for supper. One had a piece with treacle or jelly (no butter) to leave the house after your meal. We had less porridge on Sunday, with a cup of tea, and sometimes an egg divided between two, but we always had plenty to eat. There was no pastry, probably it would be better if we had less of it now, but the fact that a pig was fed probably every six months and made into hams by someone acquainted with curing, hung on one of the cleeks in the ceiling, yet seen in many of the old houses, provided a wholesome meal and as tasty as one can get in any shop to-day. Those who want porridge can still have it, but surely it is better if one can have a choice.

### Roads and Pathways.

The roads in these days had no tar macadam, and during the summer months the roadman had a contract breaking metal. The whin from the quarry was put down in bings, and the roadman broke that at so much per cubic yard. Old Geordie Simpson was the man for this district, and I am not too sure that the men on our roads to-day are more interested in their work than old Geordie was. For instance, I can remember two hawthorn bushes at the roadside, one near to Moraybank and the other near J. Davidson's garage, which were trimmed like an umbrella, and gave shelter from heavy shower of rain during the time these were in foliage, but they are now neglected.

To return to roadmaking, the whin broken by the men in summer was put on the roads during the autumn and winter. A layer of earth was put on top, and the traffic carts and hob-nailed boots were the road roller. Clogs were put on the cart tracks to divert the traffic to another part of the road, so that the metal should be equally pressed. Footpaths there were none, so I need not write on footpaths. There certainly at some parts was the side of the road, but no ashes, flagstones or concrete could be seen. In place of footpaths on the Station Road, we had from the bottom of Irvine Park, now the bowling green, an open ditch or burn on the left hand side right down to Easson's buildings, a continuation of which can be seen to this day, eastwards.

At the Cross Roads on the west side, now the site of the Gothenburg Hall, we had a deep opencast ditch or burn discharging into the burn from Drumsink and past Forrest's buildings, the place at the car terminus often to this day flooded. From Baxter's Row (gas manager's house) right down through Kelty to Bridge end Burn on the left side of the road we had an open ditch with covered entrances to Church Street and Pleasance

Row. Just at the entrance to Adam's Terrace, we had what was known as the Blue Gates, while the railway crossing was called the White Gates. You can appreciate we had no room for footpaths.

#### General Condition of Life.

Some of the younger generation may ask how did you live, how did you dress, did you have entertainment. We lived a life to ourselves, we were, in a way, happy, we quarrelled and fought, we agreed and we fought again, but we knew that we were one united body if any outside influence tried to interfere with our mode of life. The dress of fifty years ago was different from to-day. No man would dare to wear a collar through the week, but no man looked outside the door on a Sunday who didn't wear one. A gravat was the weekly neck dress, and it was useful, as in washing you never required to be particular.

The women's dress has altered more than the men's. While I cannot remember the women wearing crinolines, I can remember my brother Alex. And I playing Spy-O, by hiding in my mother's dress, which was hung up at the bottom of our bed, although I never saw her wear it.

#### Entertainment's.

Did we have entertainment's in those days? Yes, in some respect better than we have now, because at times we had to make it. One of the best entertainment's I ever saw was Shuffle Katie. A hall had been built at Keltyhead (the Co-operative branch site) and was called Meallie Ireland's Hall. This hall could accommodate 300, and was well booked. Grant, the singer and fiddler, a blind man, who made his living on the boats plying between Granton and Burntisland (when there was no Forth Bridge) during the summer, and holding concerts in the village during the winter months, could always command a good house. Andrew Doig, the dancing master and fiddler, always paid Kelty a visit. We had plays, "Alone in London", "Reddie's Bonnie Dochter." "Uncle Tom's Cabin". And even "Rob Roy." has been staged in Kelty Hall, but Shuffle Katie took the bun. This was a show where the proprietor worked his figures with strings, and did the talking at the same time. His daughter spoke the female parts, and "The House That Jack Built" was a great attraction. This kind of performance is now called a Marionette show, but we called them mechanical figures.

Last but not least, we had a series of gatherings during the winter called penny readings. Anyone who had a desire to show their talent always had an opportunity. The chairman, often Johnnie Houston, sometimes Willie Penman or Robbie Cunningham but no matter who took the chair the audience always had something original from the platform. The admission was one penny, and these were well attended. The band was also in existence, and the members I can recollect were Mathew Blair, W. Wyse, J. Houston, David Tweedie, Alex. Mill, Sandy Beveridge, William Philp, William Ness, and my father.

George Fernie was the drummer, but I always remember how the dancers enjoyed the dance when my uncle, Will Wyse, took the two sticks to the drum.

On New Year's Day the band played through the village, and to the factors at Dullomuir. They then played dances at Shorthouse's, Bridge end, Turbaynes, Neil Baxter's, and usually finished up at Dick Hunter's Oakfield Inn. I said finished up - I need not describe how they finished up. A band of twelve was a good band at that time, and I can remember Kelty Band playing up through Oakfield, going to Lassodie, and it was said to be a good band with ten players and a drummer. One of the ten was Alex. Mill, playing the clarinet; that must be 55 years ago.

*The West Fife Echo  
December 1929.*



*CHURCH AS A BLACKSMITH'S SHOP.*

FATE OF A COWDENBEATH BUILDING.

From a Church to a Blacksmith's Shop is the transition that has overtaken a well known building with the passing of years at Cowdenbeath. Behind Cowdenbeath Railway Station stands the first Church that was built in the town - it was then a village. It was known as Cowdenbeath Free Church, and was built in 1862.

The Free Church developed into the present Guthrie U.F. Church. For the last thirty years therefore, the old Free Church stood vacant - at least for religious purposes. Adjoining the linen factory of Messrs Erskine Beveridge, however, it served for many years as a dining hall for the employees and as a storehouse.

Now however, its once sacred walls resound to the clang of the Blacksmith's hammer, and in place of the flash of spiritual wisdom that are reputed to have emanated from the pulpit, there are now the physical sparks from the ringing anvil.

The building has been acquired by Mr P. Adamson, Cowdenbeath, who has converted it into an admirable blacksmith's shop.

*The West Fife Echo*  
*June 25, 1930.*

*BLAIRHALL COLLIERY BATHS.*

THE FIRST INSTALLATION IN WEST FIFE.

The employees of Blairhall Colliery are thrilled at the prospect of having the use of baths at the colliery in the near future. This model colliery belonging to the Coltness Iron Company, Ltd., and is the first to install baths in West Fife, which speaks volumes of praise for the management. Good progress is being made with the erection, with all modern appliances pertaining to baths, including a canteen.

This innovation will prove a great asset to the workmen, more especially those who happen to be wet. The opportunity of having a change of clothing and a nice warm bath is bound to prove beneficial to all concerned, and likewise add comfort to the men returning home from their daily toil in the mine.

*The West Fife Echo*  
*August 6, 1930.*

*BLAIRHALL PITHEAD BATHS.*

NEW SCHEME OPENED BY SECRETARY  
FOR SCOTLAND.

The new pithead baths at Blairhall Colliery, erected at a cost of 10,000 pounds by the Central Committee of the Miners' Welfare Fund, were opened on Saturday by the Rt. Hon. William Adamson, Secretary of State for Scotland, before a large and representative audience.

The site for the baths was granted by the Coltness Iron and Coal Company, proprietors of the Colliery. The first of their kind in West Fife, and the most up-to-date in Scotland, the baths have accommodation for 704 persons, with two lockers for each person. Sixty cubicles, equipped with shower sprays and hot and cold water, have been provided, and in a special section for officials there are 74 lockers, six spray baths, and two plunge baths. In addition to a first-aid room there is boot cleaning and greasing and lavatory accommodation, while drinking fountains have been installed and points where men can fill their water cans before proceeding to their shift. In addition, and as an experiment, the District Welfare Committee have made a grant of 800 pounds from the District Welfare Fund for the building and equipment of a canteen, where tea, coffee, etc., can be obtained. For the maintenance of the baths, after a ballot was taken, the men agreed to a deduction from their wages of 4d per week, and the proprietors of the pit have agreed to bear a share of the contribution on a basis equal to the sum contributed by the men.

A resident superintendent in the person of Mr J. McComb, Motherwell, has been appointed; and he will have a staff of two permanent assistants. The Baths Management Committee consists of: - Trustees, Mr A.M. Ritchie, agent, Coltness Iron Company; Mr D.R. Gillespie, manager, Blairhall; and Mr John Cook, representing the men. Committee - Mr Gillespie, chairman; and Mr Robert Boyd, Secretary; and Messrs Robert Stirling, John Cook, John Forbes, John Forrest, Wm. Gillmour, Robert Fowlis, Wm. McPherson, and Allan Paterson.

REVOLUTIONISE LIFE OF MINER.

Mr W.H. Telfer, managing director of the Company, presided at the ceremony, and included in the platform party were Mr C.C. Reid, of the Fife Coal Company; Mr D.R. Gillespie, manager of Blairhall Colliery; Mr A.M. Ritchie, agent of the Company; Mr R.W. Wallace, Hallbeath, chairman of the Fife and Clackmannan Mineowners' Association; Mr John Paul, of the Lochgelly Iron and Coal Company.

Mr Adamson, in his address, said that the provision of pithead baths would make a complete revolution in the life of the miner and in his housing conditions. Not only did

these baths provide him with the opportunity of going to and from his work clean and comfortable, but in his home the wife and mother, who had hitherto to do all the cleaning and drying of the clothes in the home, would have this enormous amount of toil lifted from her shoulders. It would mean that for the first time in their lives the miner's family would have the full use of the house under infinitely healthier conditions, free from dirt and discomfort inseparable from the miners having to bath and have his clothes cleaned and dried in the home. The provision of baths at the pithead was only one of the many activities in which the Miners' Welfare Committee were engaged which would revolutionise mining life and mining conditions. The provision of Institutes and Halls, swimming baths, pavilions and recreation grounds, cottage hospitals, and convalescent homes, and education and research are engaging their attention with the view of improving the health, increasing the social amenities, raising the standards of education, and giving the miners more knowledge of the elements of danger inseparable from his occupation. As a matter of fact, if the Welfare levy is to continue, and it was going to continue, there was no limit to the part the Welfare Committee could play in the evolution of mining and the life of the mining community. (Applause.)

Many men were spending a large part of their time in the Welfare work, among that number their own chairman, Mr R.W. Wallace, was playing a very important part. Only those who were closely associated with him knew the time and energy he was spending in developing that phase of mining work in this community. Not only in welfare had Mr Wallace done real service, but in the ordinary relations between employer and workman over a long series of years as chairman of their joint conferences. He had served his day and generation trying his best to secure peace when things were critical. He (Mr Adamson) was very glad that Mr Wallace's colleagues had recognised his service recently in a special way, and while he had not the opportunity on that occasion of contributing a word of appreciation, he gladly availed himself of that opportunity now. (Applause.)

In Conclusion, Mr Adamson, referring to the conditions of the industry, said he wished he was in a position of congratulating the mining community on the condition of the industry but, unfortunately, they were passing through very trying times. To such an extent was this the case that some of their people had come to the conclusion that the mining industry was done. He did not share that view. This was not the first time in our long history when men had come to the same conclusion, but by putting a "stout heart to a stey brae" they were able to get over their difficulties and bring back days of prosperity to the industry. He had no doubt but that the native genius of the race would enable them to surmount their difficulties and enable them to bring back better days to the industry again. His closing advice to every man interested in the mining industry was "Don't waste time looking at your hill - climb it." (Applause.)

After the visitors, numbering about 150, had inspected the baths, tea was served in a marquee, Mr Telfer again presided, and expressed the opinion that it was only a matter of

time until most of the collieries in Great Britain had installations such as they now had at Blairhall.

Commander B.T. Coote, technical adviser to the Central Committee of the Miners' Welfare Fund, at the social meeting formally assigned the baths to the custody of the trustees. He said that in Scotland pithead baths had been erected at nine collieries, and eight buildings were in the course of being built. The Blairhall baths were the biggest that had so far been built in Scotland.

Accepting custody of the buildings, Mr A.M. Ritchie, agent of the Company, said that there seemed to be a superstition amongst the miners against pithead baths. They took a vote on the question at Blairhall some time ago, and a large number of men voted against it. He believed, however, that they would soon see practically all the men using the baths and that the baths would make new men of them. (Applause).

On behalf of the workers, Mr John Cook also accepted custody of the premises.

In proposing "Success to the Coal Industry," Mr George Menzies, managing director of the North British Steel Company, said it was good to know that the best minds on both the owners' and employees' sides were engaged in seeing what they could do to put this basic industry on a sound footing again. The menace of unemployment was hanging heavily on all who were captains of industry, but he hoped that, with sanity, goodwill, and comradeship, there would be brought prosperity not only to the coal trade but to all their British industries. (Applause.)

Replying, Mr Jas. Cook, assistant general secretary of the Fife, Clackmannan, and Kinross Miners' Union, said he was convinced there was a silver lining to the cloud which was hanging over the industry at the present time. This depression was an international one, however, and he took heart in that fact, for it was possible for the coal owners of the world to make a concerted effort to solve the problem. (Applause.)

On behalf of the architect, contractors and colliery company, Mr John Cook, Blairhall, presented Mr Adamson with an inscribed rose bowl as a memento of the occasion and, in accepting, Mr Adamson observed that the provision of the baths at their collieries had been one of the dreams of his life. Reverting again to the mining industry, he said he was a super-optimist as regarded the trade, for which he believed there were days of prosperity lying ahead.

Mr C.C. Reid proposed the toast "Success to the Blairhall Baths." He said that the industry would only be prosperous if the men and masters would forget about strikes and troubles and concentrate on the best production at the cheapest cost.

Mr D.D. Gillespie, the manager of the colliery, replied. Provost Wilson, Dunfermline, and Mr David Barr, general manager of the Glasgow Iron and Steel Company, also spoke.

“The Architect and Contractors,” proposed by Mr John Forrest, Blairhall, was replied to by Mr J. Dempster, architect, London, and Mr J.R. Watson, contractor, Leith. The chairman was thanked on the call of the Rev. J.M. Gow, Culross.

*The West Fife Echo*  
*September 10, 1930*

*CLOSING OF LASSODIE COLLIERY.*

DEMOLITION OF PIT SHAFT.

*Notices have been posted at Lassodie Colliery, belonging to Messrs Spowart & Co., Ltd., terminating the employment of over 300 men. The Company intend to dismantle the pithead buildings*

---

All the houses in the village of Lassodie have to be evacuated within fourteen days, as the Company proposes to demolish these. It is understood that a representation on the subject is being made to the colliery company by the Fife, Clackmannan, and Kinross Miners' Union with a view of securing occupation beyond the expiry of the 14 days notice for those occupants of the houses who may be still employed.

According to Colliery officials it is but a matter of time before the whole village will be evacuated. Kelty Co-operative Society have a couple of private shops, one in Lassodie village and the other at Fairfield, less than a mile away where a few of the Lassodie miners are resident. These shops will in due course be closed. Meanwhile the work of demolishing the pithead building and lifting hutch rails underground is being undertaken by a number of men whose services were retain for that purpose.

*The West Fife Echo  
May 9, 1931*

*LASSODIE COLLIERY WORKERS.*

FINDING EMPLOYMENT ELSEWHERE.

About a score of Lassodie colliery miners have started work in neighbouring collieries. Most of the men who have so far been engaged belong to the former rescue brigade of the Lassodie pit. A number of the men have started at the Fife Coal Company's colliery at Bowhill, and a few have got work at the Aitken Colliery.

At the pithead the following notice has been posted up: - *"In terms of the conditions of employment, the houses belonging to the Company and occupied by workers must be vacated when the contract of employment terminates, and notice is hereby given that this condition must be complied with by May 14, 1931."*

The problem of finding other accommodation is a very acute one, and the County Council has been approached and asked to render assistance.

The colliery has been closed owing to the prohibitive cost of working due to the heavy volume of water that had to be pumped. The dismantling of underground machinery is expected to end this week.

THE POSITION AT HILL OF BEATH.

Following the closing of Dalbeath Colliery, which was the main source of employment of the miners residing in the village of Hill of Beath, a committee has been set up to attend to the needs of the men who have so far been unable to secure work at surrounding pits. A deputation representing the committee visited Mr C.C. Reid, general manager of the Fife Coal Company, limited, their County Council representative, Mr James Potter, Crossgates, and the Company's agent for the district, Mr J.B. Calder. Mr Reid promised that employment would be found for as many as possible of the Hill of Beath unemployed in the Kinglassie and Bowhill areas in the near future.

In connection with the plea for reduction in rent and other questions, Mr Reid said he would meet the deputation at a later date. Mr Potter promised that, if possible, he would endeavour to secure work for some of the unemployed on road schemes. The deputation consisted of Mr P. Sweeney and Mr E. Traynor.

*The West Fife Echo*  
*May 16, 1931.*



*HOUSING OF LASSODIE PEOPLE.*

SUGGESTED REMOVAL TO KELTY.

*Mr J. Potter, Crossgates, at a meeting of Fife Public Health Committee at Cupar on Tuesday, said the housing situation at Lassodie was getting what he termed "a wee bit desperate."*

*MORE DWELLINGS TO BE ERECTED.*

The pits had been closed and dismantled, and the people occupying 100 houses were being pressed by the Fife Coal Company to go away. There had been five evictions granted by the Sheriff. He had been asked if he could help. The conditions were deplorable, especially in the old row. The houses were not fit for folk being in. A representative of the proprietors had informed him that they were paying 550 pounds of rates and takes and 90 pounds for property tax. The return for rent last year was 350 pounds. The folk would leave the houses tomorrow if they could get a house elsewhere.

Mr J. Sneddon said that Kelty was the proper place for Lassodie folk to come to, and they would require another fifty houses at Kelty to suit the Lassodie folk.

A remit was made to Brig.-General Crosbie's housing committee to go into the whole matter of the housing at Lassodie.

In connection with the supply of drugs and dressings to infectious diseases hospitals, Brig.-General Crosbie directed attention to the wide difference in price for mentholated spirits, which ranged from 4s to 10s per gallon.

Dr Pratt Yule, County Medical Officer, stated that the larger price was charged for the smaller hospitals, where the quantity supplied was perhaps six to eight ounces.

Mr John Sneddon, Kelty, said there was too big a difference in price.

Brig.-General Crosbie said that now that Dr Yule had got the matter under his close supervision he would report at once any case of extravagance.

Unfit For Habitation.

The Committee considered proposals in regard to the needs of the various districts of the County for the provision of houses, and agreed that the following houses should be built:  
 - Kirkcaldy district - 32 at Lumphinnans, 32 at Kinglassie, 20 at Coaltown of Balgonie;  
 Dunfermline district - 30 at Crossgates (providing satisfactory arrangements as regards

drainage is proceeded with), 60 at Milesmark and Blairhall, 20 at Limekilns, 12 at Crossford; Cupar district - 36 in all; St Andrews district - 8 at Leuchars, and 16 at Guardbridge.

It was reported that in 1931 a total of 1574 houses had been inspected in Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy districts, and 306 were found unfit for human habitation. In the eastern district of the County 1494 houses had been inspected, and 118 found unfit for habitation.

*The West Fife Echo*  
*March 5, 1932*