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THE "PLUCK ME," CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6 - to have a running account in the Stores until the time of Settlement: when, notwithstanding their high wages, from Eight to Ten sometimes Twelve Dollars per month, exclusive of maintenance, little remains due to them. The facility of gratifying their appetites, the Vanity of their Wives, and the imagined wants of both, hurries them unawares into irretrievable Debt. This management, besides the necessity it creates of paying high wages to the men, to Enable them to drink for the benefit of the Store; at the same time promotes idleness, which is to be remedied only by Increasing the number of hands (that is. Customers to the Store) for the further benefit of the storekeepers: All which does apparently countenance the reasonableness of the present high price of coals...." This is from a report written at Sydney, October 31st, 1794. Richard Brown, in his book The Early History of the Coal Trade, looking back to all that period before the take over by the General Mining Association in 1827, wrote: "All the workmen...were allowed rations of beef, pork, bread, and molasses, which were given out weekly. If a man was absent from his work, of course he had to pay for his rations.... The working time, both in the pit and on the surface, extended from 5 A.M.-to 7 P.M., with an allowance of one hour for breakfast at 9 A.M., and the same for dinner at 1 P.M. All hands, being summoned to breakfast by the ringing of the bell, abandoned their work and rushed to the store, whence each, having swallowed a glass of raw rum, went to his breakfast. The same process was repeated with regard to dinner, and again at 7 P.M....There were only two pay-days in the year.... As the men, in the meantime, were not furnished with any accounts of their wages or purchases at the store, they generally found, at the final settlement, that, after paying for clothes, stores, rum &c., they had very small balances to receive. We need not wonder that, under this system, the lessees, as has often been asserted, made more profit by the sale of their stores than of their coal." Although not every company store was burned in 1925, it seems clear that with the exception of the one at Donkin, every one on that side of Sydney Harbour was destroyed. The only company store building standing today is the old Baker House at Sydney Mines, which housed a General Mining Association store until it moved out to a larger building. This company store, as it happens, also burned • but that was after the fires of 1925. It stood where the British-Canadian Co-op stands today. Our thanks to the men who shared with us their experiences with the company stores, and to Chris Severance, Director of the Miners Museum, and Robert Morgan for their help; and an especial thanks to Mrs. Clara Steele, Secretary of the Miners Museum at Quarry Point, for her enthusiasm and her aid. You can get a 10-month subscription to ORGANIC GARDENING AND FARMING magazine for \$3.00, one-half the regular price. Write to them at Organic Park, Emmaus, Pennsylvania 18049. Please tell them you saw this offer in Cape Breton's Magazine. _' J. W. StepKervs Lircvited WHOLESALE AND RETAIL BUILDERS SUPPLIES HARDWARE AND PAINTS WOODWORKERS AND MILL WORK Phone the Lumber Number 564-5554 Sydrxey. r ov?v Scotiev A member of the BOLD organization Cape



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