

13640

FROM GEORGE PATTERSON.

New Glasgow, N. S.
Dec. 20, 1909.

Dear Sir:

I have kept your letter of 18th ult. by me ever since its receipt in the hope of being able to find time to answer it at length with the arrival of the Christmas vacation I felt I could count as having some leisure but though the vacation is here the leisure I had hoped for seems as far away as ever. I cannot however longer delay my reply to you but I must be brief.

Besides such general knowledge of the working of the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act as one in every position would naturally have I have twice been chairman of Conciliation Boards under particularly difficult circumstances. And I have no hesitation in saying that the Act as it stands is an excellent piece of machinery for the purpose of which it was intended. My experience only suggests one change of importance and that is in the personnel of the Board. The Act permits the parties to the dispute to appoint any one these parties see fit and know sometimes happens that a Board will be composed of the Chairman presumably impartial and two exceedingly prejudiced parties and whom no evidence can effect. These men are of no help in reaching a fair and just decision. In such a case entirely too much responsibility rest on the Chairman to whom it may be the subject being dealt with is entirely new and involves ultimate knowledge of taking the cases before me, coalmining. I do not very well see how a proviso that the parties must not nominate as their representative any one identified with them or interested (or to put it in a positive way must only nominate one known to be impartial) could be made workable but to constitute the Board as is done in our Provincial Statute on the subject (Chapter 21 Revised Statutes of Nova Scotia, 1900) would partially at any rate meet the difficulty. Under this Act the Board consists of five, one appointed by the employer and one by the employees, one by these two (if they cannot agree a judge of the Supreme Court makes the appointment) and two by the Provincial -with your state government. Under such a Board you secure three men presumably impartial two of whom are almost sure to be experts on the subject matter of the investigation.

With best wishes for your success in the very important work committed to you, I am y

Very Sincerely yours,

W. L. Mackenzie King Papers

Volume 14

PUBLIC ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES
CANADA