COAL MINER ACCUSED OF DRAWING DOUBLE PAY.

A criminal action was heard in the coal mining town of Fernie, B.C., last week, which created something of a furore there and held the attention of coal mine operators and coal miners throughout the province. The circumstances, in a few words, were that a miner employed by the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company was accused of loading a number of cars and placing his tally check thereon while supposed to be on company work and paid by the company. Thus he got double-pay—pay at the stated rate for company work and pay, under the contract system, for the coal loaded which in the ordinary way was credited to him. Witnesses for the defence testified in effect that it frequently happened, so frequently as to be almost a custom, that sub-officials would allow contract miners, while working on company time, credit for coal loaded by time on contract basis in addition to the regular schedule for the company shift. It was alleged that the motive for this was to "speed-up" the work by hastening the expeditious completion of necessary work and avoiding undue interference with production. On the other hand company officials and sub-officials entered an emphatic denial of the existence of such a system. The secretary of the local union declared that it was a common practice, but repudiated it, stating that it was not done with the approval of union officials. The Court in fining the accused $100 or six months in jail said: "If this custom did exist, it is a criminal one. I do not care if a few overmen or fire-bosses connived with the workmen; it was a criminal one undoubtedly. I do not share Mr. Phillips' (witness for the defence) Bolsheviki idea that it is all right to steal from your employer, but not from your fellow worker. I do not think any right thinking man will agree. But, as I say, if it was a custom, it was a criminal one and one a man should be punished for."

WESTERN CANADA'S COAL SUPPLY.

The question of next winter's coal supply begins to loom large in the minds of the citizens of Winnipeg, Manitoba, and other parts of that Province, as well as of Saskatchewan. A few weeks ago a committee representing the city of Winnipeg visited Calgary, Alberta, for the purpose of going into the matter of coal costs with the operators of the latter Province, it being contended that, if Manitoba is expected to use Alberta coal, it will have to be put on the market at a cheaper rate than the present retail price, namely, from $11.50 to $12 a ton. The delegates do not appear to be satisfied with the results achieved, stating that the operators did not evince a willingness to assist in their work, nor to show any strong desire to establish their product in the markets of Manitoba. The information they got was summed up as follows: That the coal costs on cars at the mine was $4.95; that the freight to Winnipeg was $4.15; and that administration and cartage accounted for another $2. In the face of this, it is admitted that there does not seem to be any indication of profiteering; but the members of the committee expressed disappointment that the mine owners had not thrown open their books for inspection in order that these statements might be confirmed. The difficulty, however, was agreed to be the high freight charges and Mr. S. C. Oxton, deputy minister of public works, Manitoba, and Mr. J. A. McDonald, acting fuel administrator for the Province of Manitoba, recently interviewed the fuel administrators of Alberta with a view to finding some means of bringing about a reduction in the transportation costs. In the meantime, the coal consumers of Manitoba are debating whether it would not be as cheap to pay $14 a ton for the high-class anthracite of the U. S. as against about $12 for the bituminous coal of Alberta. There is no doubt what their decision would be, but for the fact that they have been cautioned that the United States this winter will have use for its full production of coal and that the prospect is that there will be little available for export to Canada.

In answer to the statements of the Winnipeg representatives, Mr. Jesse Gouge, one of the operators of the Drumheller field, Alberta, states that, if they return and state that Alberta coal costs $4.95 a ton, they will not be telling the whole truth. He adds: "Four dollars and ninety-five cents is the maximum price for the very highest grade double-screened coal produced in the Drumheller field. Good coal, mine run, can be purchased for $3.35 a ton; good lump coal, run over single screen, at from $4.50 to $4.65 a ton; good sreen coal may be had for $3.75 a ton; nut, screened coal for $2.40, and steam coal, good for boilers and for heating big buildings, may be had at from 25 cents to $1 a ton." Mr. Gouge further pointed out that Winnipeg had use for all grades of coal, just as was the case in Calgary, and that coal costing only 25 cents a ton was being used in the Calgary City Power Plant. As to the charge that the committee members were not allowed to inspect the operators' cost book, he stated that it would have been absurd to permit men with little knowledge of coal and no authority outside of the City Council of Winnipeg such a privilege as the likely result would be the dissemination of misinformation. The owners were quite willing to throw open their records to a properly constituted Government body.

LADYSMITH SMELTER.

Some weeks ago it was stated in these columns on the authority of Mr. W. J. Rattle, general manager of the Ladysmith Smelter Corporation, that this British Columbia Smelter would be blown-in after some months of inactivity on the 20th of June, 1918. Because it was not possible to arrange definitely for a continuous supply of ore that programme was not carried out; but it now is stated that preparations are practically complete for the re-opening of the smelter with good assurance that its furnaces will be kept busy. The date now selected is the 29th of July. Besides being reported to have a bond on the Willow Grouse Mine, Cowichan Lake, the Ladysmith Corporation has secured the Girtwood Mine on Latouche Island, Southeastern Alaska. The latter is an old producer and in the past has shipped regularly to the Tacoma Smelter, its average for considerable periods being 1,000 tons a month. The property joins the Beatson, owned by the Guggenheim interests, and by reason of being near tidewater the transportation is simple.

THE WAKESIAH—A NEW COAL MINE.

The Canadian Western Fuel Co.'s new mine, situated near Nanaimo, B.C., and two shafts of which are being sunk to tap the famous Wellington Seam, will be known as the Wakesiah Mine. To reach the seam, the shafts must be sunk 350 feet. The concrete collars are in, and sinking has progressed to a depth of about 50 feet in the hoisting shaft. Plans have been prepared for the various buildings and machinery and mine yards. The mine will be up to date in every respect, and will be shipping coal before the end of the year. The company has three other producing mines, yielding a monthly tonnage of approximately 65,000 tons, and mining from three seams—the Douglas, Newcastle and Wellington.