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WESTERN FUEL SITUATION

As we go to press the reports from the West are disturbing. More than one thousand coal miners are out on strike. The supply of fuel for the railroads is rapidly reaching the vanishing point. A fuel famine threatens the whole West, from Winnipeg to British Columbia. Unless an immediate solution is reached, traffic will be almost altogether stopped, factories closed and smelters shut down.

The president of the United Mine Workers' Union, in responding to an urgent telegram from the Minister of Labour, requesting the miners to await Government investigation, characterized the investigation as a farce, and threatened to "carry this fight to the foot of the throne." The president's intemperate message is the sort of indiscretion that does incalculable injury to the labour cause. Instead of attempting in every way to aid the Minister in peacefully solving the difficulty, the miners' representative breathes fire and slaughter. In pursuing this course he antagonizes public sympathy (that most potent factor in deciding any such struggle) and places the body of men whom he represents in a very false position.

Under recent legislation the Minister is endowed with certain powers. We hope that these powers will be used to their utmost in promptly putting an end to this strike. It is iniquitous that the country should be subjected to enormous loss, that many of its most important industries should suffer indefinite suspension merely because the leaders of labour organizations are not amenable to reason.

Whether the fault lies with the operators or with the miners is immaterial. It is an utter anomaly that either corporations or individuals should have it in their power to inflict grave loss and permanent injury upon the country at large. The men, or the corporations, who deliberately tie up traffic and cause a suspension of industrial activity, should be held criminally responsible, and should suffer the full rigor of the law. Canada has had her full share of labour difficulties. It is high time that disturbers of the public peace should be dealt with promptly and severely.

DEVELOPMENT

A new stability is lent to the market for Cobalt ores from the fact that Welsh and German smelting firms are sending inquiries and offers. One mine in Cobalt received an offer of terms as follows: Ore carrying 1,000 ounces silver to the ton, 93 per cent. assay value; ore carrying under 1,000 ounces silver to the ton, 92 per cent. assay value; cobalt under 7 per cent., 20 cents per pound; between 7 per cent. and 10 per cent. and over 10 per cent., from 20 cents per pound to 40 cents per pound. Nickel also is sought at 10 cents per pound on ore carrying over 5 per cent. The opening of a larger market for cobalt and nickel will encourage conservative mining, and will render "gophering" less excusable. Anything that will lead to the sane exploitation and rational development of Cobalt mines at this stage of their history will inevitably lengthen the life of the camp and vastly increase its ultimate value.