

A Dead-lock in Western Coal

ON All Fools' Day of this year a general coal mine strike was precipitated in British Columbia; in the mines from which not only that Province, but also the three prairie provinces obtain much of their fuel for household use and for industrial purposes. Up to date the strike is still unsettled. For weeks now, under the Lemieux Act, a Board of Arbitration has been sitting, with Rev. C. W. Gordon at the head. The preacher-author was chosen by the Minister of Labour, presumably because in his stories of the west he has settled a very large number of grave disputes right off the reel.

But there still seems no sign of settlement. Meanwhile, many widespread human interests are beginning to be aroused. The miners themselves find that they have lost millions of dollars. Mr. A. C. Flumerfelt, a well-known Victoria capitalist, says in an interview:

"The actual loss to the miners by reason of their quitting work is about \$20,000 a day. This stoppage of work has now lasted ninety-one days, which figures up a loss in wages of about \$1,700,000. Apart from the loss sustained by labor by the reduction of train crews, in addition to the recent temporary closing down of mines and smelters, and the inconvenience caused to the whole west, there is an economic loss running into many millions which can never be regained. Then, too, this has a very serious aspect when one contemplates the possibility of its continuance later on in the year, with the prairie provinces unsupplied with fuel."

Besides the loss to the miners and operators over this colossal piece of leisurely stupidity, and the even greater loss to the industries and the business of British Columbia, an even graver menace hangs over the heads of people who, many hundreds of miles from the said mines, still depend largely upon the coal of British Columbia for household fuel. In this connection the Winnipeg Telegram very incisively says:

"The economic conditions which prevail make this dispute an absurdity. There is abundance of coal, and a large, growing, and exclusive market. In such circumstances a dispute between owners and operatives as to the conditions under which the coal shall be taken out must be due to curable selfishness or removable misunderstanding. People may regard with amusement the problem of what happens when an irresistible force strikes an immovable post. But when they happen to be between the force and the post their amusement turns to grave anxiety. It is there the unfortunate public dependent upon these mines stands at the present moment."

"The Lemieux Act has never proved itself of the slightest advantage in any real labor dispute. The disputes it has been claimed it settled would have been settled in just the same way without its operation, and where some good should have been accomplished it has uniformly broken down. In regard to this particular strike the Labor Department has exhausted its resources in a leisurely manner without any result."

At the same time municipalities are bestirring themselves, even on the edge of the greatest wheat harvest the west has ever known. They realize that even with a probable two hundred million bushels in the harvest fields, the west can't burn wheat for fuel. Calgary has set out to provide its own fuel. A committee has been appointed by Mayor Mitchell to search for coal. One Bob Jackson has offered to sell the city a mountain mine for \$14,000; coal that can be put on the car at \$1.75 a ton. Collieries up at Camrose along the Battle River are being exploited. These are hundreds of miles from Calgary; lignite coal, such as can be found in many parts of the Saskatchewan valley and in southern

Manitoba. Edmonton, of course, has a large quantity of such coal in the near vicinity; the city itself being built over some old coal mines.

It seems to be a problem in which civic corporations and boards of trade should unite to press upon both the British Columbia and the Dominion Government, that it is high time the dispute between stubborn operatives and equally stubborn mine owners in British Columbia should be settled by Government itself operating the mines in the interests of the people.

Imperialist Once More

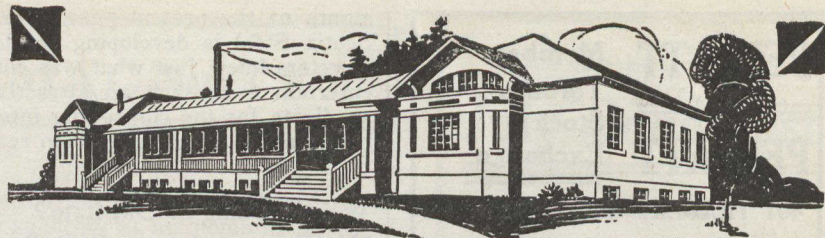
SIR WILFRID LAURIER has been saying things in public as a citizen of Ottawa which as Premier of Canada at the Imperial Conference he did not say. In his speech at the civic welcome tendered him by the citizens of Ottawa he shook off party politics and delivered himself with much of the old-time enthusiasm and eloquence that have given him such a reputation as a great commoner in Canada. He spoke with great warmth of the coming of the Duke of Connaught as the next Governor-General of Canada. Among other things he said:

"It will be our privilege, as I told you a moment ago, to have with us as our Governor-General a member of the Royal family. Let me tell you, my fellow-citizens, that when I left Ottawa two months ago I had an impression which had been formed by a course of history, by a study of the British constitution and by a study of recent events, that the Royal family of England, as representing the British Crown, was a bond of union between all the different classes of England. Now, I come back with that impression, nay, with the certainty that the British Crown is a bond of union, not only for the different classes of the United Kingdom, but that it is a bond of union for the whole of the British Empire."

"The Royal family of England is not only a Royal family of which we as British subjects have reason to be proud, but the Royal family of England from the King and the Queen to their children and all the collateral members have given to the world at the present time an example of those domestic virtues which so strongly appeal to the British heart and which are the foundation of the happiness, prosperity and grandeur of a nation."

"These examples, given to the people, from such an exalted source, are no doubt, one of the greatest assets which a people can possess. I do not say this in any spirit of sycophancy. I am out of the soil of England, but still in British territory. I say this as a deliberate conviction. When we have a member of the British Royal Family coming as the representative of His Majesty the King, it is due to us to make the event worthy of a loyal people."

"I was asked by the Duke of Connaught, by the Duchess and by the Princess Patricia what kind of a reception they would have. I told them and I am sure I was only repeating the conviction of your hearts that if the affection of a loyal people could make their stay happy in Canada they would be happy indeed while they were amongst us. They said to me that they were looking with keen pleasure and expectation to their visit to Canada. I am sure that they will not be disappointed. It is not as Prime Minister of Canada, but as a citizen of Ottawa, that I ask you to receive him. Four years ago, on a similar occasion, I stated and I have only to repeat, that if I should vacate the position I now occupy I want no other position than that your government should appoint me as a member of the Improvement Commission. That is work which I have had much at heart—the improvement of the city of which I have now been a resident for the last fifteen years, in which I shall live the rest of my days and in which I shall die."



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The Canadian Courier