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Personal.

Ottawa, Jan. 30, 1911.

My dear Miss Reid,-

I have not had an opportunity of answering your letter of the 25th instant before this, as it was only today that I was able to get into personal communication with Mr. Butler, the new Manager of the Springhill mines. I know he was coming to Ottawa on other business and thought the occasion would be opportune to secure the latest information from headquarters.

I might mention that Mr. Butler was Deputy Minister of Railways and Canals while I was Deputy Minister of Labour, and that having been colleagues in this way, we have an intimate friendship of some years standing. Mr. Butler did not hesitate to speak to me very frankly. What he says in brief is that the Dominion Iron and Steel Company has secured a controlling interest in the Mines at Springhill and that he is now the Manager of that concern, Mr. Cowans no longer having any say, one way or the other. Cowans, in fact, has left Springhill altogether and is now residing in Montreal.

Mr. Butler says he has at present about 600 men working. Practically all of them have been brought in since the strike commenced. He has recently proposed an arrangement which he thinks will get over what has been one of the main difficulties respecting the allowance to be made for stone and which will mean an increase in the wages of the most poorly paid labour, though it may involve a reduction in some cases of men highly paid. He purposes allowing as many as he can of those who are out on strike to return and take advantage of the new proposal he has submitted provided they are willing to do so. He would not be able for about a month to take on more than 100 men should the strike be immediately declared off this number being necessary to clean up the mine, but later he would be able to add considerable to this number. If the men now out do not take advantage of the situation he proposes sending to Scotland and bringing out miners from that country.

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