

existed and still exist in the mining regions of British Columbia. If the minister is sincere in this matter, he will do that. This strike is one of the most unfortunate things that has ever occurred in this country. There has been bloodshed; there has practically been murder. A young boy who pleaded guilty on the understanding that he would be acquitted or pardoned or released under parole if he did so, subsequently died in jail. I say again if the minister is sincere he will introduce this legislation and amend the Act under which he says there is no provision made for such a case as this.

The minister has also told us that this matter first came to his attention through press despatches which he noticed on September 18, 1912. But months before that date it was within the knowledge of almost every person in this country who read the newspapers that a strike was threatened in the coal mining districts of Vancouver Island. I want to read part of an editorial with reference to this strike which appeared in the Ottawa Citizen of Tuesday or Wednesday, I think, of this week. It says:

For nearly two years, since May, 1912, the coal miners of Vancouver Island have been fighting for the right to organize on similar lines to their comrades in Britain. A very large proportion of them are old countrymen; sons, brothers, relatives and friends of the men who make such a strong showing in the British Parliament. To smash their organization on Vancouver Island, the monopoly interests in control of the coal lands, dismissed the men's organizers and finally locked out every union man in the Nanaimo district.

Those organizers were dismissed two or three months previous to the day which the hon. minister mentions as being the first time this matter came to his notice, and that this is what led up to the strike. They were dismissed simply and solely because they were endeavouring to better the conditions of labouring men in the mines of Vancouver Island, and I say that those conditions were such as to make men feel keenly the position taken against them by the coal mine operators of that country. The article goes on:

To Sir Richard McBride they appealed in vain for a commission of inquiry. A miners' delegate was dismissed from the Mackenzie-Mann mines for reporting unsafe conditions, although provincial mine inspectors subsequently verified the report. Asiatic labour was imported and is now employed in the mines, doing the work of skilled miners. Protests to Premier McBride were merely ignored or evaded, although Commissioner Price, appointed by Hon. Mr. Crothers, verified the fact in his report, as the following excerpt will show:

...the number of Orientals employed underground in the mines of the Canadian collieries. (Mackenzie-Mann) has increased very materially since last September, not only relatively but absolutely, the total number of Orientals employed in May, 1913, being 432 out of a total of 690, as against 315 out of a total of 766 in 1912, and probably among surface men the increase has been proportionately greater.

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In addition to Oriental labour, coloured men and mongrel breeds were imported, to be used as serfs, to smash the solidarity of the white miners. The cheap imported labour included a lawless element of thugs and gunmen. On the authority of a responsible minister of religion in Nanaimo, the imported blacklegs provoked a riot by insulting conduct to the miners and their womenfolk. But the riot provided the looked-for excuse for the McBride Government to send militia to Nanaimo.

As I explained this afternoon, I cannot altogether agree with that last assertion. (Reading):

While the locked-out, or striking miners were holding a peaceful meeting to consider an offer to return to work, their hall was surrounded by militia with machine guns. They were ordered to file out of the meeting and were subsequently placed under arrest. Many were held without trial for several weeks, and finally sentenced on a trumped-up charge: to disfranchise them from voting at the next elections, it is alleged—

Then there is some reference to a member of the House, which I am not going to read. (Reading):

Some of the men, decent English, Welsh and Scottish coal-miners were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment; arousing strong protests from pulpits, press, and all classes of Canadian citizens in the west. One miner's boy innocent of any offence, died in prison a few days ago. He had been advised that if he pleaded guilty he would be let off with a nominal sentence. He took the advice but instead of an acquittal he received a heavy sentence and died in jail. The editor of the Vancouver World, Mr. L. D. Taylor, refers to the miner boy's death as 'blood that calls from the ground.'

And yet the Minister of Labour tells us that August 14, 1913, the day after those riots occurred, was an opportune time for his commissioner, Mr. Price, to make his report. I maintain that this report, if correct, discloses a shameful condition of affairs—and it is taken from the Ottawa Citizen, a paper which has not much sympathy with the Opposition in this House or the political creed of the party to which I myself belong. Canadian militiamen shooting down Canadian workmen who are endeavouring by peaceful methods to better their positions by proper labour organization—it means that and nothing more. Whilst both the Murray Administration in Nova Scotia and the Laurier