

LONGSHOREMEN'S UNION.

The trouble on the waterfront between the Longshoremen's Union and Stevedore McDermott led to the summoning of two members of the union to answer a charge of using threatening language and interfering with non-union men working. This is a serious kind of charge—a charge, which, if proven, would have gone hard against the accused. However, the fact that Mr. Powell for the complainants asked to have the case dropped, on the ground that he had been misinformed by the complainants, shows that the object of summoning these men had some ulterior purpose to serve. It is scandalous that men should be subjected to such unjust treatment without a chance of redress. Some few issues ago, a case was recorded where an organizer was accosted on the street, taken to the police court, searched, and papers taken from him. There was no reason why this act should have been perpetrated. Something must be done to stop this business of invoking the law without proper cause or reason. The only apparent object to be served—as far as can be seen—is to try and run a bluff to scare union men.

To start at the beginning of this trouble: The Longshoremen's Union was founded on the 31st of January, 1901. No attempt was made to increase wages until the 27th of April, when it was decided by the union that all China boats should pay 40 and 50 cents—50 cents for night work, Sunday work and statutory holidays. On the 10th of May it was decided that all coal handled by stevedores be charged 40 cents for day work and 50 cents for night work, excepting C. P. R. boats.

The idea of charging stevedores more than companies is recommended by the international union. The section concerning this reads: "Local unions are requested to endeavor to abolish the stevedore system by taking the work themselves directly."

On the 20th of May the scale on all coal was raised to 40 cents and 50 cents; this included companies as well as stevedores.

On the 10th of June all stevedore work was raised to 40 cents day and 50 cents night work, holidays and Sundays.

On the 22nd of July it was decided by the union to raise the scale on all general freight from 30 to 40 cents, to 40 and 50 cents.

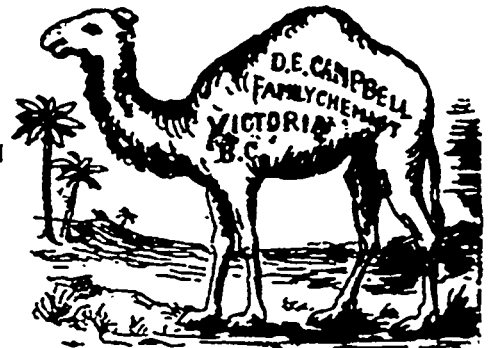
The first objection to paying this rate was on the Largo Law between the 26th and 29th of July. Alex. McDermott, the stevedore, refusing to pay the

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scale. Since this time on Mr. McDermott has refused to employ union men. It will be seen that from the 10th of June up to the arrival of the Largo Law on July 27th, Stevedore McDermott paid the union scale without objection. Why he objected to paying the same on the Largo Law is not excusable on the grounds that he was jumped upon without notice, because for over six weeks he had recognized and paid the scale on other vessels.

The union is persistent in its demands, and will insist upon a uniform scale of wages, and will not work for any stevedore who does not pay it.

The longshoremen are now prepared to do stevedore work themselves. This will, they contend, permit them to make a fair wage and at the same time enable ship-owners to save the exorbitant charges they are being assessed by the stevedores. In short, it means that there will be no middle man's charge. Arrangements are being made to establish agencies at Liverpool, London, and Glasgow, and when these are completed bids will be forwarded for the purpose of discharging the ships and saving the expense of the middle men for the ship owners, thus making Victoria a cheap port of entry for discharging cargo.

Stevedore McDermott claims that he has a full crew on the ships Red Rock and Alexandria Black, and that he is not hampered in the least. Investigation shows that the stevedore is working the crew of sailors in the holds of these ships. Six longshoremen could do as much work as twelve sailors, who are paid at the rate of 50 cents a day by the captain and 50 cents from the stevedore. The latter paid his share last week, but the captain's promise stands good to pay at some future date. It is a question whether, according to the articles signed by the sailors, it is legal to work them in this instance. The only ground upon which the crew of a ship can be worked in handling freight is in the absence of labor being available. It is contended in this case that labor is obtainable and this infringement on the rights of the sailors is not justified. In addition to this the cargo of the Red Rock has been contracted out to the stevedore and should be handled by him—not by the crew of the ship.

The daily press has had statements from both sides. In one instance a statement made by Mr. McDermott calls for more than an explanation—it asks for a flat denial. In the Colonist, among other things, Mr. McDermott is reported as follows:

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