SIDE TALKS.

By Ruth Cameron

And then after Christmas

"Well, thank God it's over."

Or did you hear them, too?

1 rather suspect you did.



wrote down some time you've asked me to spend my of the -things I Here are some guess the sex of the author of that re-

of the results of mark.) my reporting: "I feel as if Christmas were sitting on my chest and crushing the life out of me. I simply don't see how I can get all the twice I'd commit suicide." things done that have just got to be

If She Gets Through Christmas Alive. "If' I ever get through Christmas alive it'll be a wonder. I've had the worst cold but I can't afford to give in

got to the stage where I'm ly-Ing awake nights. I wake up about two o'clock and lie there for hours just for cut of Christmas? Shall we say worrying over the things I've got to tend to. I must call up the store about let ourselves lose sight so completely their sending the wrong size tennis of true value? Shall we stop now just racquet. And I must get some silk to as we are beginning to get caught in finish that bag. And I must call up to see if that chair that's being fixed preparations and solemnly pledge ourover for Jane's room will surely be done on time. And I must start on the Christmas cards that have a long ways joy and love and peace the keynotes to go. And I get wider awake and Christmas mood this year? more nervous every minute until I'm

Like A Black Shadow.

shadow over me. I really did start bration of the birthday of Christ. early this year but everything went wrong. Billy had one of his croupycolds so I was kept home a week by your Hockey Boots from us and that. And then Jack's sister-in-law we will attach your skates free that we would agree on all points." visited us and I had to give up every- of charge .- dec17,tf thing to entertain her. And then everything I tried to buy was imposthe whole thing I could cry."

HALIFAX, N.S., Dec. 22.-The One Big Union, a rival labor organization rica, operating in Pictou County, had ts innings to-day before the Royal commission investigating the coal industry of Nova Scotia. The case for the O.B.U. was, presented by William Murray, Secretary of the Union, and concurred in by Robert Foster, Walter Lloyd, and Joseph Ryan.

William Murray, the first O. B. M. W., which he characterized as a hour doing some job like that. heard poople say Of course if you want to break me duct their affairs, including the burial during the holi- down with this confounded Christmes of their dead. Under cross examinabusiness." (I will leave it to you to tion of Sir Andrew Rae Duncan, chairman of the Commission, the witness detailed the alleged sins of the British Empire Steel Corporation and the al-"It's a mighty lucky thing Christmas comes but once a year. If it came throughout the Nova Scotia coal fields. He gave as his opinion that the wages Do these things sound unnatural to ed an increase of about 100 per cent. increased by approximately 45 per cent., the miner should be able to live contended, conditions were at normal ployment. He submitted that an in-

Must we say them again this year? Or shall we have a vision of the abto ourselves that we simply will not Pressed by the chairman, he stated that he favored an increased wage the whirlpool of frontie Christmas scale irrespective of whether or not selves not to make a travesty of the earning. Elaborating this contention, spirit of Christmas but to make true he held that by improved methods of mining, and better salesmanship, the Corporation could afford to pay a higher wage scale, and he maintained hat this method was preferable to Suppose we do. Here's my hand on maintaining or decreasing the pres-

it. Yours for a simpler, more peaceent scale. "I feel as if Christmas were a black ful, more joyous, more loving cele-

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Most vegetables should not be seasible to get. I'm so disappointed over soned with salt until just before they

Declares Besco and U.M.W. Responsible for Miners' Unrest

AT HALIFAX SITTING.

ons of the Royal Commission in o-day. The morning session was taken up with the presentation of the ease for the One Big Union operating in Pictou County, the afternoon with United Mine Workers of America and the evening sitting largely with the reading of a brief setting forth alleged discrepancies as between the price

witness called, charged that the U. foreign organization, had come into Nova Scotia in 1919 and had underopinion contributed to the unrest at present paid the miners representover the wages paid in 1914, while at the same time the cost of living had improvement of existing conditions.

The Witness: "I may not agree with you, Mr. Chairman, on this

The Chairman: "Well, we are both Scotch, and it is hardly to be supposed

Discussing the alleged sins of the J.M.W., the witness contended that the resentment toward the international organization in Picton went deeper than the usual normal differences of opinion existing among the membership of any organization. The O.B.U. he contended, had a membership of 500 in Pictou alone. He agreed that this represented a small proportion of the total U.M.W. membership of from thirteen to fifteen thousand. He further admitted in answer to questions put to him by the Chairman that the disruption of the union would prove a bad thing for the miners, and agreed the U.M.W. had within its con-

grievances of which he complained. The O.B.U. was opposed to the system of having the Company make deductions from the men's wages, commonly known as the "check-off" but he agreed that the O.B.U. enjoyed the benefits of the check-off in Inverness despite the constitution of the organization. He expressed the opinion that if the men were left free to contribute to the union, a better feeling would develop and a stronger organization

stitution the democratic machinery

necessary for the righting of the

Questioned by Major Hume Cronyn as what he regarded as a fair minimum wage, the witness contended that the standard of living as set up by the Labor Department involved

ack at the Old Home

but twenty nine of the necessaries of life and made no provision whatever

gaged as a brusher, charged that he had been dismissed by the Underround Manager of a colliery because e had refused to belong to the U.M. W. He further testified that he had en forced out of the U.M.W. when the Provincial Workmen's Associat local had voted in favor of merging tion. His chief grievance against the institution. The Union Jack was goo enough for him, he testified, and add-

Robert Foster, a miner from the Albion pit, and Joseph Ryan, a timberer employed in Acadia No. 3 concurred in the evidence given by Messrs. Mur-

ed that he bitterly opposed having his

William Hayes, Springhill, was the chief witness examined during the afternoon. He is international board member of the United Mine Workers poration appreciated this condition because under the circumstances it was easier for them to impose unwelcome

"Do you realize that if the corpora tion pared down the number of employees, a large number would be put out of employment permanently?" ask-

so many employees in the first place."

replied Mr. Hayes. Mr. Haves blamed the corporation for introducing changes in working cite an instance, he told of boys being sent in as loaders at the "long wall" in No. 2 mine, Springhill, after he had pany that only regular miners would be sent in and paid a rate of \$6.00 per day. The toys had been sent in and paid \$3.30. The men's committee had not been consulted, he said.

The witness was against the system of double shifting mines and said it should not be resorted to except when absolutely necessary. He did not think if the system were to be carried on some special allowance in rates should be allowed for those who worked

"Why." asked the chairman. "Because it is harder on a man's health if he works during the nights," answered the witness.

"Cannot a man sleep as soundly, from 1 a.m. to 9 a.m., as the same period any other part of the day?" asked the Chairman.

"According to the doctors he not," replied the witness. "That's what I'm going ly."

The witness said the Corporation was trying to destroy the labor union. Every time a contract expired the Corporation tried to effect a reduction or fought an increase and spent as much money as it would take to meet the men's demands. He believed shot firers should be members of the union and charged that the Corporation was making officials of them so that they could not be union members.

Fighting for wage increases and better working conditions were not the only objects of the organization. Hayes declared, and proceeded to tell of the activities of the United Mine Workers.

"It would be nothing to be ashamed of if those were your only objects, would it?" asked Sir Andrew.

"No but I'm simply attempting to show that there are other things in which we are interested." The witness defended the check-off as it constituted a recognition of the union and saved collection expenses.

"Do you pay the Corporation for collecting dues for you?" asked the "No, but we used to pay them ten

"Woudn't it be cheaper to collect them vourself?"

"Oh, no, I don't think so." The witness pointed out that there was nothing compulsory about the check-off. A man could prevent his dues being deducted from his wages by asking

Regarding wages the chairman asked Hayes if he would favor raising the present rate of wages even if the result were to decrease employment. "Yes," replied the witness.

"How can you explain that theory?" "We will get the idle time anyhow so we might get higher rates when

we do work." John W. McLeod, District President of the United Mine Workers, asked the witness to explain the workings of the check-off, which he did, pointing out that it was one dollar per month. Coal costs were discussed particularly the cost to the consumer in Nova Scotia as compared with the cost of produc tion. The witness said cost sheets had never been made public and believed they should be and thought no detrinental effect would be felt by the company. He thought the prices paid

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THE SHOE MEN

der to lower the cost of coal in Hali- obviate the necessity of double shiftfax?" asked Mr. McLeod. The witness

J. E. McLurg, vice president of the British Empire Steel Corporation, cross examined the witness. "Do you believe in 100 per cent. Hayes. strikes?" he asked.

"No, Sir," replied Hayes. "Do you believe in 100 per 'cent. picketing?" continued Mr. McLurg. "No, I'm not speaking for the future but for the past. At the present moment I do not believe in 100 per cent. strikes. We cannot speak for the fu-

Mr. McLurg asked the witness if it was not possible that the seasonable nature of the industry led to apparent vermanning of the mines, but the they would offset the necessity of McLurg.-Sydney Post. ouble shifting the Springhill colliery at the peak of the season. Hayes said

"Where would we get the money?"

"Use the money saved in that reduction of wages you took off us," replied-Mr. McLurg asked the witness if he

hought it would be better for the men if the Corporation paid them their full wages without deduction of union fees, doctors fees, church and other levies as at present. Mr. Hayes thought it would be more satisfactory. "Do you think it would reduce criicism of the Company if we paid the

men their full wages with no deduc tions?" Mr. McLurg pursued. "The only way to reduce criticism overmanning of the mines, but the by the men is to put enough in their pay envelopes," said Mr. Hayes.

asked Hayes how he would suggest "We'll come to that later," said Mr.

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