

I can assure you, sir, without exaggeration, that this matter is one of life and death to the settlers here, one requiring immediate action.

Your obedient humble servant,

Wm. L. RAMSAY,
Chairman of Committee.

To the Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier,
Premier of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.

Having read this letter I discussed it with the committee representing the men. I pointed out how, in a crisis such as it depicted, every hour was a matter of the most serious import. I dwelt upon the time it would take for the committee to go to Indianapolis and return to Lethbridge, and of the possible suffering which might be occasioned to a large number of families in the interval. By Tuesday night we had reached a point where I had what I believed to be a sufficient assurance from the men that the clause which I had drafted should be acceptable to them, and had I been able to obtain from the company a similar assurance, a settlement, I believe, might have been reached without further delay on the basis of what had been mutually agreed upon at the joint conference. About eight o'clock that night I was, however, informed that my clause had been submitted to the Managing Director, and that word had been received that the clause originally drafted by the company must not be changed.

Action taken to Avoid Delay.

I felt that once the situation were understood by the Managing Director he would see no objection to the clause I had drafted being substituted for his own, but I knew it would be a matter of a day or two before he could be sufficiently informed of the nature of the crisis and make known his final decision. It will be remembered that he was in Ottawa at the time, and that all communication with him had to be conducted by wire. The experience of the preceding days had shown that communication by wire was most uncertain and that considerable delays were inevitable. Moreover, there was not a certainty that the Managing Director would remain in Ottawa and there was the possibility of wires failing

altogether to reach him for the course of a day or two. I knew that to go to Indianapolis and return to Lethbridge would take the members of the committee who had been delegated to refer the situation to President Mitchell a week or ten days and there was the possibility that some misunderstanding as to the exact position of affairs might arise while there which would further delay matters. I had, therefore, to decide whether it was better to wait in Lethbridge and run the risk of misunderstanding arising as well as communication being cut off through storms or from other cause, or go along with the representatives of the men to Indianapolis, so that I would be in a position to assure them positively of the company's final attitude as soon as word arrived, and if the occasion appeared to require it, discuss the matter with Mr. Mitchell himself. I was fully conscious that, as a government officer, I would be subjected to considerable public criticism on the part of some not familiar with all the facts were I to go to Indianapolis, but with people facing acute suffering and the possible danger of death through freezing in their homes, I felt that I would be guilty of an unpardonable wrong if I refrained, at the risk of possible criticism, from taking any step which would help to bring about a speedy termination of the strike. I decided, therefore, to go to Indianapolis with the representatives of the men. Before doing so, however, I had an assurance from these representatives that if matters could be arranged to their satisfaction before we reached Indianapolis or after we were there, they had authority to declare the strike at an end, and that a wire from Indianapolis to other officers of the Union at Lethbridge would be sufficient to bring the strikers together in a meeting within a few hours and secure their ratification of the action of those whom they had authorised to act on their behalf.

End of the Strike.

We left Lethbridge shortly after midnight on Tuesday and arrived in Indianapolis on Saturday morning. On Wednesday morning I endeavoured, in a

communication to the Managing Director, to acquaint him fully with the nature of the crisis. Before leaving I arranged with the General Manager at Lethbridge to wire me to Indianapolis the company's final decision and I left both parties a copy of the terms mutually agreed upon at the conference. Matters turned out precisely as I expected they would. When we reached Indianapolis, I received the following telegram from the general manager at Lethbridge:—

"Managing director still thinks our clause fair to all parties, but under circumstances existing in country, is willing to accept your substitute clause provided all other conditions are accepted."

I showed this wire to the representatives of the men with whom I had gone to Indianapolis, gave them an assurance in the name of the Government that the company had accepted the clause which I had drafted and the conditions agreed to at the joint conference, and an hour later the strike was declared at an end.

I had no interview with Mr. Mitchell; the president of the district union who was one of the committee who went to Indianapolis, and who had been given authority to take final action in the matter, stated that these conditions were acceptable to the men and that he had therefore declared the strike at an end. He showed me a telegram which he was sending to the representatives at Lethbridge informing them of the decision reached. This ended the negotiations.

Work Resumed at the Mines.

I am informed that immediately the wire from the district president at Indianapolis was received at Lethbridge the remaining members of the committee at that point called a meeting of the men. This meeting was held on Sunday, December 2, and the decision of their representatives declaring the strike at an end on the basis of the settlement reached was ratified by the men. The same evening representatives of the men informed the company that the terms of settlement had been ratified, and that the men were prepared to return to work immediately. Monday morning, the day

following, the former employees of the company presented themselves at the colliery office. All the hands that it was possible to take on were engaged, but a number of the regular miners were obliged to wait until the rooms and galleries in which they were to work were cleared and made ready for them in the portions of the mine which during the strike had not been in operation. The company commenced the employment of double shifts and it was expected that within a short time the mines were hoisting coal to their fullest capacity.

Nature of the Settlement.

In the basis of settlement reached an increase of wages amounting to practically an extra ten per cent for most of its employees was granted by the company, which also agreed to the appointment of a check-weighman to protect the interests of the men, and to deduct from its employees through the pay-roll, the amount necessary for the payment of such check-weighman; except in the case of deductions for the check-weighman the company was not to make any collections through the pay-roll, save in respect to rent, doctor and hospital fees, coal, powder, oil, and other supplies furnished by the company, and, if the men so desired, for a sick benefit fund and library. It was agreed that the company would not object to its employees being or not being members of any organization, but all employees, whether members of an organization or not, were to be upon an equality in the company's employment. Preference in employment before strangers was to be given by the company to any of its employees involved in the strike, provided they made application within a reasonable time. To avoid the possibility of future strikes or lockouts it was agreed that in the event of a dispute or grievance arising on the part of one or more of its employees which could not be adjusted through a reference to the pit boss, the same might be appealed to the superintendent of the mine, and further, if necessary, to the general manager, and a committee of two of the company's employees were to be allowed to appear