

cided to refer matter to Royal Commission, appointing yourself and Judge Winchester commissioners. Commission will be issued immediately.

(Signed) RODOLPHE LEMIEUX,
'Minister of Labour.'

Later in the day the following communication was received by the Deputy Minister of Labour from the Honourable R. W. Scott, Secretary of State:—

W. L. MACKENZIE KING,
'Deputy Minister of Labour,
'King Edward Hotel,
'Toronto.

OTTAWA, February 2, 1907.

'Minute of Council has been approved, appointing you and Judge Winchester commissioners under Public Inquiry Act to inquire into telephone strike. The commission has been issued and will be mailed you to-day. With this assurance, I presume the operators will return to work.

(Signed) R. W. SCOTT.

The commission issued to His Honour Judge Winchester and Mr. Mackenzie King conferred upon the commissioners the power of summoning before them any witnesses, and of requiring them to give evidence on oath, and to produce such documents and things as the commissioners deemed requisite to the full investigation of the matters into which they were appointed to examine. The following extracts from the order in council, making provision for the investigation by the commissioners, and which was attached to the commission, will indicate more fully the scope of the commission and the circumstances under which it was issued:—

'On a report dated February 2, 1908, from the Minister of Labour, stating that the mayor of Toronto having on the 29th January, requested the intervention of the Department of Labour for the purpose of averting a threatened strike of the employees of the Bell Telephone Company in that city, he directed Mr. Mackenzie King, the Deputy Minister, to proceed at once to Toronto and lend the good offices of the Department of Labour under the Conciliation Act, with a view to effecting, if possible, a settlement of the difference.

'The minister observes that the mayor stated in his communication to the department that the time of the operators was to be lengthened from five to eight hours; that they contended it was a physical impossibility with the enormous telephone business of the city of Toronto, to stand the strain of such long hours; that the company refused to deal with them in any way, and that a strike of the telephone operators would seriously affect the public interests.

'The minister further states that Mr. Mackenzie King has reported that the anticipated strike occurred before there was opportunity of conferring with the parties; that having used his best efforts to effect a settlement, the company have stated that a joint conference between representatives of the parties is impossible, and that the company are unwilling to refer the subject of the difference to a board of arbitrators. That the operators affected are willing to accept a joint conference or to leave the matter to arbitration and abide by the award of the arbitrator. Further, that the company have stated that they strongly desire that for the information of the government, the general public and the operators a full investigation be made, that an accurate judgment may be formed upon the course the company have taken, that the operators have stated that they also desire a full investigation, and will agree in the event of the government appointing a board of inquiry to return immediately to the company's service upon the schedule of rates and hours the company have proposed and abide by the findings of such board.

'The Minister is of opinion that it is in the public interest that this dispute should be terminated as speedily as possible, and both because of the nature of the dispute and the express wish of the parties it is desirable that a full investigation should be made into the subject of the difference, and that to this end a commission should be immediately appointed to make expeditious and careful inquiry into the said dispute and all matters affecting the merits thereof, and the right settlement thereof.

'The Minister, therefore, recommends that it be referred to William Lyon Mackenzie King, Deputy Minister of Labour, and to His Honour John Winchester, Senior Judge of the County Court of the County of York, as Commissioners under the provisions of Part I. of Chapter 104 of the Revised Statutes, 1906, commonly called the "Inquiries Act" to hold and conduct such inquiry with all the powers conferred upon commissioners by the said part.

'The Minister further recommends that the Commissioners report to the Minister of Labour the evidence and proceedings with all possible despatch and make such recommendations as to them seem advisable.

The commission as here indicated was issued at Ottawa on Saturday, February 2. It was received at Toronto on the Monday morning following, on which date the commissioners, as already stated, entered upon their duties.

The company had, in anticipation of the strike, brought in operators from Ottawa, Montreal, Hamilton, London, Windsor, Peterborough and other centres. Over 100 in all appear to have come to Toronto, some of them arriving on the morning the strike took place and the remainder on the day following. Some 25 persons chosen at random from among the number of those who had been brought to the city were asked to appear before the Commission on Tuesday, February 7, at the beginning of the sittings of the commission. On that day a medical certificate from Dr. Alton Garratt was produced, in which it was stated that of the 25 persons selected, 13 were in too precarious a condition of health to permit of their giving evidence. Dr. Garratt, on being examined in reference to the certificate, stated that all were suffering from a good deal of nervousness, that some were suffering from sore throat, tonsillitis, laryngitis, &c. The 12 who gave evidence were examined at some length. They were all from among the most highly remunerated employees of the company at the localities from which they came. Several of them were in positions of authority, commanding good salaries. Some had been in the service of the company for a number of years. They apparently understood, before leaving to work at the points from which they came that they were being brought to Toronto to fill the places of those who were likely to go out on strike. They had been asked by the local managers in their several exchanges if they were willing to come, and appear to have consented without any undertaking other than that all expenses would be paid and their services remunerated at the rate of their regular salaries. However, the president of the company, Mr. C. F. Sise, in a letter written from Montreal on January 30, to the local manager at Toronto, advising the latter that forty operators were leaving Montreal on the following morning, stated: 'The operators who leave here to-morrow morning have expressed the utmost loyalty to the company, and state that they propose to see us out of our difficulties at Toronto, and in recognition of their loyalty we do not propose to stop on a question of dollars and cents.' None of those who came appear to have had any expectation of remaining permanently in Toronto. They had been informed that their services would probably be required for a few days only, the inference being that the operators at Toronto not being effectively organized and a number of them self-dependent, it would be but a matter of a few days before