

## CHAP. II—THE UNITED BROTHERHOOD OF RAILWAY EMPLOYEES' AND SYMPATHETIC STRIKES.

THE strike at Vancouver of certain employees of the Canadian Pacific Railway, who were members of the United Brotherhood of Railway Employees, and which commenced on February 27, had, at the time the Commission began its investigation, been on foot for a longer time than any of the strikes in the province during the present year. This strike was investigated during the sittings of the Commission at the city of Vancouver, which were held after the Commission had concluded its sittings at different places on Vancouver Island. The Commission having originally intended to visit the boundary and Kootenay districts, it was deemed advisable to conclude the taking of evidence on Vancouver Island before proceeding to the mainland, and for this reason, and the additional fact that there appeared to be greater urgency for an immediate investigation of the mining disputes, the strike of the United Brotherhood of Railway Employees, although occurring earlier than the strikes on Vancouver Island, was not taken up until the taking of evidence in regard to the latter was concluded. But its relation to, and bearing upon the other disputes, make it desirable that it should be the first to be taken up in this report.

### Sources of information.

Preliminary to the taking of evidence at Vancouver the Commission required each party to the dispute to file an affidavit of documents which would cover all correspondence relating in any way to the strike. An immense mass of material was produced in response to this direction of the Commission by both the company and the strikers. Privilege was claimed by both sides for the greater part of the correspondence

produced. On examining the correspondence the Commissioners found that it contained practically all the information which was necessary to give a complete understanding of the entire situation, and of the purposes and methods of both parties to the dispute. To have formally brought out in open court even the most important of the facts established by these documents would have occupied the time of the Commission for several weeks. The parties themselves were unwilling to have much of the information publicly disclosed, but expressed their willingness to leave all of the documents in the hands of the Commission, and joint admissions were very properly made that all the documents and correspondence were what they purported to be, and it was agreed by the parties that the Commissioners might refer to such of them as they might think necessary or proper and draw inferences of fact therefrom. The agents of the telegraph companies at Vancouver and other points, were required by the Commission to produce all telegrams which had been sent or received by their offices by any parties concerned in the dispute, and which related in any way to the matters before the Commission.

### Settlement of Strike before Commission.

The Commission having in its possession all the material evidence bearing on the situation, the parties requested its assistance in effecting a settlement of the dispute, and after one or two days' negotiations a settlement was arrived at, the terms of which, having been accepted by the representatives of both parties, were filed with the Commission, to be retained as a sealed document in the Department of Labour at Ottawa. This course led to the immediate termination of the original strike, and the several strikes which had taken place at

other points on the company's system, as well as the sympathetic strikes in other trades.

It was felt by the Commissioners that to have pursued the taking of evidence to other than a limited extent, while negotiations were pending, would have precluded the possibility of a settlement, and that after the settlement was effected, it was not in the public interest that the trouble should be publicly ventilated any more than was necessary. The Commission, however, satisfied itself in the first instance that the documents in its possession were sufficient to satisfactorily demonstrate the nature and causes of the strike. Our report on this strike is, therefore, based primarily on documentary evidence, but only such documents have been made use of as the Commission feel satisfied are authoritative and in the public interest to disclose.

### The United Brotherhood of Railway Employees.

As has been mentioned, the strike of the employees of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company at Vancouver who were members of the United Brotherhood of Railway Employees, commenced on February 27, 1903. Immediately after, it was followed by strikes among members of the Brotherhood at other points on the Canadian Pacific Railway, and by sympathetic strikes in other callings at Vancouver and elsewhere. The nature and causes of the strike itself, and the strikes which followed in consequence of it, cannot be rightly understood without explaining in some detail the nature of the organization known as the United Brotherhood of Railway Employees and the relations which existed between this organization and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company for some time previous.

### Oath Administered to Members.

The United Brotherhood of Railway Employees was constituted in January, 1901. It is a secret society, bound together by the following oath:

I do most solemnly and sincerely swear (or affirm), freely and voluntarily, upon the Holy Bible and my sacred honour, that I will never reveal any of the secrets of the United Brotherhood of Railway Employees, which have been heretofore, shall be at this time, or may at any future time, be imparted to me as such, to any person whomsoever, unless under lawful authority of the Brotherhood; that I will never write, indite or print, or allow to be written, indited or printed, if in my power to prevent it, any of the unwritten work of the Brotherhood; that I will uphold and support its constitution and by-laws, and will obey and abide by all regulations and mandates issued through its various official channels, and will respect and comply with all decisions of its tribunals, when in accordance with its constitution and laws; that I will not knowingly wrong, cheat, nor defraud any member of this Brotherhood, or speak ill or slighly of any member thereof; that I will assist all destitute worthy members of the Brotherhood who may apply to me for relief, so far as lies within my power; that, other things being equal, I will give employment to a member of this Brotherhood in preference to a stranger; that I will give members due and timely notice of any danger that I may know of, threatening them or their families; that I will recognize all signs, passwords, grips or signals which may be given me by members of the Brotherhood; that I will endeavour at all times to uphold and maintain the dignity of the Brotherhood; that I will not recommend any candidate for membership therein, whom I have reason to believe would prove unworthy. All this I most sincerely and faithfully swear (or affirm), and will steadfastly keep and perform without the least equivocation or mental reservation whatsoever, and will consider this obligation binding, whether I remain a member of the Brotherhood or not.

### Nature of Organization.

This oath is administered during a lengthy and impressive ceremony.

The headquarters of the organization are at San Francisco, and its purpose is to embrace in one organization all classes of railway employees. The management of the affairs of the Brotherhood is in the hands of its president and board of directors, who are clothed with exceptional powers in the direction of the affairs of the entire Brotherhood. As an illustration of the nature of this power, and also of the main purposes of the Brotherhood in endeavoring to effect an organization that may embrace all classes of employees upon railways, the following, which is section 25 of Article 5 of the constitution of the Brotherhood (the Article which defines the power of the president) may be quoted:—

Whenever a reasonable satisfactory adjustment of grievances of a member or members of the Brotherhood, or of the Brotherhood, or