

early date some one to make an investigation," but the Prime Minister failed to present to the House a single achievement to the credit of the Minister or his Department since the formation of the Government.

Industrial Conditions on Vancouver Island.

Each debate had particular reference to labour conditions as they have existed on Vancouver Island for nearly a year and a half. As respects this situation the facts are briefly as follows: On the 16th of September 1912, the miners in the employ of the Canadian Collieries Limited, at Cumberland, B.C., to the number of 983 ceased work. This number was augmented two days later by 700 miners in the employ of the same company at Ladysmith. The cause of the dispute was alleged discrimination against employees because of membership in the United Mine Workers of America Union. On May 1st, 1913 a further cessation of coal mining operations took place in the mines of the Western Fuel Company at Nanaimo where 1494 miners quit work; also at the mines of the Pacific Coast Coal Mines Ltd., at South Wellington employing 350 men and at the mines of the Vancouver-Nanaimo Company, Ltd., where another 350 were employed. On the 1st of May 1913, there were altogether, with other employees directly effected, over 4,000 men out of work, practically the whole coal mining population of Vancouver Island.

While the places of many of the men at Cumberland and Ladysmith came to be filled in the course of time, the majority of the men affected by all these disputes have been without employment since the commencement of the trouble at their respective mines. Where the mines were partially working prior to and since the beginning of this year white labour was replaced in part by the employment of Orientals, thereby greatly aggravating the labour situation in British Columbia.

During the month of August 1913, severe rioting broke out at Nanaimo, Ladysmith and in other localities. It continued for several days, property was destroyed, injuries were received, innocent third parties maltreated, troops were called out, many arrests were made and subsequently, many imprisonments. The mining districts resembled for a time a militia camp, as many as 1,000 militia men having been called out.

Indifference of Minister of Labour.

It was shown by members of the Opposition that with the exception of writing one or two letters informing the parties of the nature of the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act, the Minister of Labour had done nothing himself nor had caused the officers of his Department to do anything worthy of mention from the time of the cessation of mining operations in the mines of the Canadian Collieries in September 1912 until June 1913, at which time the Minister had appointed his friend and former law partner, Mr. Samuel Price, a Royal Commissioner, at a salary of \$40.00 per day to investigate the trouble. It was shown that the Minister had travelled with Mr. Price in a private car to British Columbia, spent a few days on Vancouver Island interviewing some of the parties, and had then returned leaving Mr. Price to prepare a report. It was after the Minister's return that the rioting took place and that industrial disturbances on the Island reached a menacing condition unparalleled in its history. It was shown that at this critical moment, the Com-

missioner, Mr. Price, turned in his report, and that the Minister, instead of realizing the obligation placed upon him by the duties of his office, went to England for two months on what was virtually a holiday jaunt. Though the Minister's trip was at the public expense, the public has never been informed of either the purpose or the results of this sojourn abroad, beyond a general statement to the effect that it was to give the Minister an opportunity of studying conditions in England at a time when, more than any other, he was needed to deal with conditions at home. Commissioner Price's trip and report, though also a considerable expense, disclosed little or nothing not already a matter of public knowledge.

Influence of the Interests.

The correspondence laid upon the table of the House revealed the circumstance that the Mackenzie and Mann interests control the mines of the Canadian Collieries, Ltd., at which the trouble commenced, and that, while there was on the fyle of the department of Labour an abundance of material relating to the attitude of the miners, there was virtually nothing, other than mention of oral interviews, as to what had passed between the Minister of Labour or the officials of his Department and the Mackenzie and Mann interests. The Minister acknowledged having had interviews with Sir William Mackenzie though he refrained from giving to Parliament any intimation as to their nature or as to what passed between them in conversation.

Among the papers in the correspondence brought down was a translation of a code message to Sir William Mackenzie at Toronto, sent on October 7, 1912 from an official of the Canadian Northern Railway Company at the mines, which contained the following:

"We expect men very shortly to hold indignation meetings and return to work, repudiating Union entirely. Union's appeal to Ottawa their last resort. If unsuccessful, Union dead, and labor trouble ended."

It was contended by the Opposition that this telegram afforded the real clue to the non-intervention of the Department, and to the neglect and indifference of the Minister and the Government. Without reservation, it was charged that it was because of the Mackenzie and Mann influence over the Borden Government that no action had been taken, and not even an investigation commenced until nearly a year after this telegram had been sent. How doubly serious was this charge will be seen from the inference of the telegram that certain defeat of the men would be the result of non-intervention on the part of the Minister.

But the Opposition did not stop at this point in driving home its criticism of the Minister and the Government on this score. It was shown that as respects the reinstatement of some of the Grand Trunk Railway Company's employees, the Government had boasted of its power to compel the carrying out of the terms of the agreement between that Company and its employees by threatening to withhold legislation until those terms were complied with, but that on the other hand, where it was the Mackenzie and Mann interests that were affected this method of helping to bring about a settlement of differences had not been attempted; that, in fact, the very opposite had been done, and that at the last session of Parliament a grant of over \$15,000,000 had been made from the public treasury to Mackenzie and Mann practically without a condition when it was known to the Government at