

United Action of American Organizations to bring about Strikes in Canada.

Informed by the American Labour Union that it is the desire of the members of the Brotherhood on strike at Vancouver that the coal supply to the railway from Vancouver Island should be stopped within twenty-four hours the secretary of the Western Federation wires to the president of the Brotherhood: 'Have complied with your request. Notified union at Nanaimo.'

The union at Nanaimo, referred to in the telegram, in Miners' Union No. 177, of the Western Federation of Miners, which obtained its charter from the Federation in December, 1902. It was the only union on Vancouver Island which, at the time, was affiliated with the Western Federation of Miners, and the only union existing in any of the coal mines on the island. The telegram sent to this union, referred to in the telegram of the secretary of the Western Federation of Miners to Estes, was not delivered at Nanaimo till 8.40 on the morning of March 6. It was addressed to Shenton, the secretary of the Nanaimo union, and was signed by Charles Moyer, the president of the Western Federation of Miners, Moyer signing his official designation as well as his name. The telegram was as follows:—

Denver, Col., March 6, 1903.

T. J. Shenton,
Nanaimo, B.C.

Use your best efforts to prevent Canadian Pacific from getting coal at Vancouver. Assist strikers all you can.

CHAS. MOYER,
(President, W.F.M.)

It is important to notice that in the telegram sent by Estes to the secretary of the American Labour Union the camps at Ladysmith and Union were specified. The mines at each of these places, as has been mentioned, are the property of the Wellington Colliery Company, and were the main sources of supply to the Canadian Pacific Railway; the Western Fuel Company, which owns the mines at Nanaimo, not having any coal contract with the railway. Ladysmith is about fifteen miles south, and Union some eighty miles north of Nanaimo.

Organization at Ladysmith, how effected.

On the same day as he received from the president of the Western Federation the telegram asking that best efforts be used to prevent the Canadian Pacific from getting coal, and that all assistance be given strikers, the following reply was sent by Shenton to Moyer at Denver:—

Nanaimo, B.C., March 6th, 1903,

Chas. Moyer,

(President W.F.M.),
Denver, Colorado.

We will render all assistance possible.

T. J. SHENTON,
Secretary.

The notice calling the mass meeting of Extension employees was posted at Ladysmith on March 7, the day after Shenton had replied that all assistance possible would be rendered. As already mentioned, it was not signed, nor did it say for what purpose the meeting was being called, nor was it known, until the sittings of the Commission, by whom the notice had been posted. From the evidence given it would appear that there had been no general agitation at the time among the body of miners at Ladysmith, either in regard to conditions of employment or the formation of a union. There had been some talk among a few as to asking for an increase in wages of ten to fifteen per cent in consequence of the removal of the United States tariff on coal a short time before, but in the statement filed with the Commission by the strikers, setting forth the grounds primarily responsible for the trouble, the subject of wages was not mentioned, and counsel for the miners disclaimed any desire to have the question of wages gone into. In fact, the witnesses testified generally as to there having been satisfaction on the score of wages, and such special evidence as was put in on this point indicated that, as compared with the rate of return in similar undertakings elsewhere, there was little room for complaint, and much for favourable comparisons, if desired.

No general demand for Organization.

Up to the time of the meeting on March 8, there appears to have been less general discussion among the mass of the miners on the subject of the formation of a labour organization than there had been on the subject of demanding an increase in the rate of wages. It was well known that Mr. Dunsmuir was strongly opposed to the formation of unions among his employees; that attempts at organization had, practically without exception, been followed by the immediate dismissal of those employees who had been prominent in the work of organization; and it was tolerably certain that like efforts at this time would be followed by like results. No question of wages or conditions being urgent at the time, the motive for effecting an immediate organization did not exist. The clause contained in the statement filed by the men that 'the mine-owner insisting upon all his workmen residing at Ladysmith as a condition of employment' was a ground for the trouble, undoubtedly contains a truth as to what was a cause of complaint among a considerable number during former years, but it was not a complaint to which the demand for organization at this time was in any way related, either by the miners themselves, at the meeting at which they decided it was desirable to organize, or, in fact, since the exodus had been completed for over six months, and Ladysmith had already become the place of residence of practically all of the miners and their labourers employed in the Extension mines. On the other hand, there had been for some time a desire on the part of a few men, who at one time or another had resided at Nanaimo, or were pretty constantly in touch with the union officials there, to effect an organization among the miners at Extension. Among these few, Mottishaw and Pritchard, the secretary and chairman, respectively, of the mass meeting at Ladysmith on March 8, were conspicuous. Mottishaw admitted having talked over the matter of organization with different miners at Extension, and the evidence of other witnesses disclosed the

fact that he had been instrumental in endeavouring to form a committee which might serve as a nucleus to effect the desired result. It was also brought out that it was Mottishaw who posted the notice calling the meeting, and it was the day after Shenton had promised that all possible assistance would be given the strikers at Vancouver that he posted it.

Evidences of Intrigue.

The fact of Mottishaw posting the notice at this time is of itself not sufficient to connect him and Shenton in the matter, but the circumstances that, having procured from the meeting on March 8 a resolution approving of organization and instructions to send for the organizer, Mottishaw left at once for Nanaimo, and there, after conference with Shenton, had the latter send the telegram to Baker in his (Shenton's) name, does, when scrutinized in the light of the conflicting statements made by these parties before the Commission in reference to the transaction, and their relations to each other, as well as subsequent events, constitute, in our opinion, satisfactory proof of the connection without any admission.

Asked before the Commission how he came to post up the notice calling the meeting on March 8, Mottishaw replied:

By the unanimous request of the fellow-workmen.

Q. When did you begin to get these requests?
A. Two weeks before the notice was posted up.

Q. You don't happen to remember the names of any men who requested you?

A. There are some gone away. There may be a few here. I could not give the names.

Mottishaw's explanation of what happened at the meeting on March 8, given elsewhere in his examination, is interesting, in view of his statement that it was at the unanimous request of his fellow-workmen he had called the meeting to consider an advance. Replying to the question put by counsel for the miners as to what took place at that meeting, Mottishaw said:

The first question that the chairman put to the meeting was that he understood the meeting was called to consider an advance of 10 or 15 per cent, not more than 15, but left it to the