

Minister of Mines, and I never on one single occasion found him to object in the slightest degree to holding an investigation and to having the offender punished very adequately. And a singular thing is, that the United Mine Workers or the miners seemed to have overlooked in support of their charge of discrimination, that I had a case of discrimination against this very company in which a foreman discriminated against his own officer, a fireman, and this matter was brought to my attention and I reported it to the Minister of Mines who at once appointed a commission and had the thing investigated, and the foreman was punished, and his certificate cancelled. I cite this as a concrete case in which the Minister of Mines had taken action where discrimination had been charged. But, unless the charge was made I fail to see how the Minister of Mines could, under the provisions of this Act, have ordered an investigation. The miners themselves failed to substantiate the charge or to make a specific charge that discrimination had occurred. Of course, they said, it was morally true. It was one of those peculiar things where actual evidence was not forthcoming, though the charge might have been true. Of course it narrowed itself down into one general demand for recognition of the United Mine Workers of America which, as you are aware, is an international organization. The hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Carvell) held up my predecessor as being a very active member in representing the constituency, but I want to tell my hon. friend from Carleton that my predecessor Mr. Ralph Smith severed his connection with the labour organizations of British Columbia because he refused to enter into any combine whereby the labour union was to be controlled by any international body.

The operators at that time felt as they feel now; they object, for reasons best known to themselves, and into which I do not purpose entering at this moment, to acknowledging an international union. Mind you, I do not say for a single moment that the miners have not the right to belong to any labour union they wish, and that whether they can compel all companies to recognize this union or not, is a matter between them and the companies. I believe the miners have the right to organize; their labour is their own affair; they are the hewers of wood and the drawers of water, and I believe they have every moral and legal right to bind themselves into a society or organization whereby they

can obtain adequate remuneration for their services. I would say this, and I am speaking now for at least four-fifths of the operators of Vancouver Island—I do not know about the other one-fifth for the simple reason that I have not interviewed them—but four-fifths of the operators say they have absolutely no objection to the men forming a miners' union among themselves, but they do refuse to recognize this particular international union. I have no brief for the coal operators or for that matter for the Mine Workers of America; I am actuated only by a desire to bring industrial peace to our town and district. Hon. members on the other side of the House have laid very great stress on that fact that Orientals were brought in very freely during this trouble, and they would lead the House to believe that these Orientals were brought in indiscriminately all over the strike zone on Vancouver Island. That is absolutely untrue. The only mines employing Orientals underground are the Canadian collieries and they have employed Orientals in their mines for probably twenty-five years. But in no other mine in the province of British Columbia is there a single Oriental employed, with perhaps one exception and that is the Extension mine, the very mine in which this trouble occurred. I believe that six Orientals are employed in that mine keeping the track in repair in a rock tunnel, but they are not allowed to go into the mine property to enter upon any of the duties that white men usually discharge.

Mr. CARROLL: Is it true that in British Columbia to-day, in only two mines are Orientals employed?

Mr. SHEPHERD: Yes, but both belong to the one company; I mean, of course, underground. There are Orientals employed at Nanaimo above ground, not underground.

With reference to the convention I have spoken of, and to show that the discrimination was the question at issue at that particular time, I will read a letter that was sent to the hon. Minister of Mines at Ottawa, dated Nanaimo, October 3, 1912. This letter will show clearly that the reason for the strike was really the question of discrimination.

Nanaimo, B.C., October 3, 1912.  
Hon. T. W. Crothers,  
Ottawa.

Dear Sir,—We, the representatives of district number 28, United Mine Workers of America in convention assembled, beg leave to submit to you our reply to your request for a statement of our position re the present