

**CONSOLIDATED CO. HAS CLOSED ITS MINES AT ROSSLAND.**

On March 31st, the Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company of Canada, Ltd., closed its mines in Rossland camp, British Columbia, for an indefinite period. This action is understood to have been taken for two reasons, first on account of the uncertainty of an adequate supply of coke being obtainable from the Crowsnest district of Southeast Kootenay, where the agreement between the coal-mine operators and the United Mine Workers of America, which controls the miners and other employees of the coal-mining companies operating in that district, and next in view of an expected concerted demand by the metalliferous miners throughout the district for an advance in wages of fifty cents a day.

In connection with the uncertainty of the supply of coke being sufficient for the continued operation of the company's copper blast-furnaces at Trail, it is manifest that no dependence can at present be placed on the Crowsnest district for the output of coke being maintained, for news was received in Victoria on April 2 to the effect that at the Crowsnest Pass Coal Co.'s colliery at Michel, the miners had stopped work, while similar action may be taken any day by those employed at the company's Coal Creek colliery. With the Michel mines and coke-ovens idle, the outlook for coke being obtained for the Trail blast-furnaces was less favorable; if the ovens at Fernie shall also be allowed to become inoperative, which must be the result if the miners shall suspend work at Coal Creek, whence comes the slack for burning into coke at Fernie, then the chances for obtaining coke for Trail, Grand Forks, Greenwood, and Northport smelting works will be small indeed.

In regard to the wages increase question, if the temper and attitude of the miners and smelter employees are correctly indicated by a "special" news despatch from Trail to the British Columbia Federationist, the "official paper of the B. C. Federation of Labor," printed on March 30, then the probabilities seem to be that the big mines in Rossland camp will not soon be reopened. That despatch follows:

"Trail, B.C., March 26.—In the territory of District No. 6, under the jurisdiction of the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers, is located the corporation known as the Consolidated Mining and Smelting Co. This company controls the greater part of the operations of mining and smelting ores in the Kootenay and Boundary country, and all of its properties are running full blast. During the last two years great changes have taken place in Trail. A zinc plant has been erected, which is turning out about thirty tons of refined metal every 24 hours, and a copper refinery has been added to the smelter, which was found to be too small. The manufacture of acid, which is necessary in the reduction process, is also carried on at the plant.

**"Unionism Not Favored."**

"A recent statement of the general manager noted that \$1,000,000 had been expended in improving the plant, and that this was done for the purpose of turning out more metal products, the demand for which had increased with the result of increased prices. In making the demands from the management it was said that the smelter was operated at a loss, in face of the fact that metals had gone up in prices more than 50 per cent. This company does not want to have anything to do with the organization of District No. 6 if it can possibly help it, but the chances of winning concessions from this corporation were never more favorable

to the men than just now, and the district is taking advantage of this opportunity.

"The shortage of labor on the market, the intense demand for metal goods at high prices, and the fact that the Consolidated pays lower wages than any other company in British Columbia for the same kind of work, are circumstances that are of benefit to the workers in this part of the country. As a result of the activities of the district organization, the company has granted a raise of wages to all its employees of 25 cents per day.

**Strike Vote on Wages.**

"The demands of the men are 50 cents per day increase, and the check-off system. A strike vote is being taken by the men on the enforcement of these demands. The sentiment of the men is to fight the issue to a successful conclusion.

"As a result of the construction work being about finished, a number of men have been discharged, and most of them have left for other fields to peddle their labor power.

"Full returns of the strike ballot are expected by April 1. It is advised that all men steer clear of the weaklings of the Consolidated until more remuneration for labor power has been arranged. The wages paid at Greenwood and Phoenix, where plants are operated by two different companies, are about 75 cents a day higher than is paid at Trail, and in the mines at Rossland, Kimberley, and other places controlled by the Consolidated."

**Difference in Conditions.**

The statement made above that the Consolidated Co. controls the greater part of mining and smelting operations in Boundary district is quite inaccurate. This is manifest when it is seen that in 1916 the Granby Co.'s mines at Phoenix shipped to the company's smelting works at Grand Forks more than 1,000,000 tons of ore, and the British Columbia Copper Company's mines, Boundary, shipped to that company's smelting works at Greenwood about 276,000 tons, while the Consolidated Co.'s mines in the district made an output of only 15,156 tons. No figures are at hand to show the respective wages scales at Boundary and Trail smelting works, but so far as the products of the mines are concerned there is this most marked difference: For five years, 1911-1915 (the 1916 figures are not yet available), the total value of the output from Rossland mines was about \$16,635,000, of which \$13,785,000 was in gold, the price of which does not change, and only \$2,545,000 was in copper, while out of a total value for Boundary mines for the same period of approximately \$24,610,000 (not including the Hedley Gold Mining Co.'s gold production of \$3,797,000) only \$5,873,000 was gold and \$17,829,000 was copper value, the latter having in 1915 at any rate benefited from War prices.

**PORCUPINE MINERS DISCUSS WAGES.**

Cobalt, April 10.—A meeting of the Porcupine branch of the Miners' Union was held Sunday in Timmins, and voting in that camp on the new wage scale is proceeding. In view of the fact that in other camps the vote is shaping up into a large majority in favor of the new scale, it is considered almost certain that the vote at Porcupine will fall in line. Complete returns are looked for by April 18. After that date it is understood the union will immediately take steps to acquaint the Government with their side of the question, and unless the increase is forthcoming in the meantime more drastic developments may be expected.