

moved from sources of supply, and the men engaged on the work were wholly dependent upon the contractors and subcontractors for all provisions relating to their food, accommodation, medical attendance and the like. The prevailing scale of wages paid was \$1.50 per day, board being supplied at the rate of \$4 per week.

During the autumn of the year various complaints were received as to the treatment of the workmen, and the death from diphtheria of two young men under circumstances of peculiar hardship, brought the whole matter prominently before the attention of the public. The company was vigorously attacked in parliament, and after a full discussion of the charges a commission was appointed in 1898 to investigate the whole matter of the treatment of the men by the contractors of the Crow's Nest Pass Railway Company, and report thereon to parliament.

In brief, the findings of the commission were that, though machinery had been provided by the company for the accommodation and medical attendance of the men, the measures adopted were not on an efficient scale. Instances were proved of violations of agreements, threatenings and illegal arrests by contractors, lack of medical attendance, non-providing of accommodation, unsanitary houses, tents without stoves, overcharges on supplies, bad methods of wages payment, and other abuses. The commission recommended a system of government regulation of the feeding, housing and transportation of men engaged in this class of employment; also that no liquor should be allowed to be sold on such works, and that wages should be paid at shorter intervals, the company or chief employer to be held responsible for the same, and this provision to apply to all works contracted for by the Dominion Government or assisted by funds of the Dominion Treasury.

As a direct result of the report of the Commission, a Bill was introduced during the session of parliament of 1898, by the Hon. the Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who explained, in referring to the measure, that the legislation in question was offered by the Government as a means of preventing in future the recurrence of such conditions as had attended the construction of the Crow's Nest Pass Railway. In a discussion which occurred in the House of Commons on July 18, 1898, on the occasion of the Bill's second reading, the Prime Minister further explained its purport and necessity as being in view of the vast unpeopled stretches of territory existing in Canada, and the likelihood of many public works being constructed therein in the due course of time, requiring, it might be, some thousands of men to be employed at points distant from civilization and without the means of communication and the settled districts.

Briefly stated, the Act grants to the Governor-in-Council power to make regulations, either of a general or special nature,