

altogether absent from the earlier enactment, by giving the power to compel the investigation of causes of difference under oath. This power, however, could only be exercised in the case of disputes between railway employers and employees; and, as regards all other kinds of labour, the provisions of the Act of 1900 alone were applicable.

By these, machinery was provided whereby the Government, in case any dispute existed or was apprehended between employers and workmen, could inquire into the causes of the trouble, and promote an amicable settlement by getting the "parties together, and if either party desired it, by appointing a conciliator," the general nature of whose duties is indicated by his title, including such functions as the "endeavouring to allay distrust, to remove causes of friction, to promote good feeling, etc."

The provisions of this statute were made use of in a number of cases, with very beneficial results, but it was subject to a serious defect in that it provided no means by which the warring interests could be compelled to desist from aggressive measures, such as strikes and lockouts, before the appointment of a conciliator, or even while he was engaged in waving the olive branch. The result, too frequently, was that before his services were invoked, hostilities had been precipitated by one party or the other, and the feelings of both became so embittered that conciliation as a voluntary measure was the last thing they thought of. Much individual distress and public inconvenience resulted from this state of affairs, and at last a peculiarly flagrant example of these evils made the urgent need of a remedy abundantly clear.

We, in Ontario, fortunately, do not know by experience what a real "fuel famine" means, but everyone must remember how narrowly such a catastrophe was averted in the Province of Saskatchewan at the close of 1906, when, on account of a long continued strike among the coal miners at Lethbridge, the settlers throughout large districts were forced, in the complete absence of other fuel, to burn "lumber at \$30 a thousand, willow bramble, twisted hay and grain," and while these sources