

tion Act of British Columbia, which I had the honour to suggest to the minister, distinctly states:—

Rule 17. The persons employed in a mine may from time to time appoint one or two of their number to inspect the mine at their own cost, and the persons so appointed shall be allowed, once or oftener in every shift, day, week, or month, accompanied, if the owner, agent or manager of the mine thinks fit, by himself or one or more officers of the mine, to go to every part of the mine, and to inspect the shafts, levels, planes, working-places, return airways, ventilating apparatus, old workings, and machinery, and shall be afforded by the owner, agent, or manager, and all persons in the mine, every facility for the purpose of such inspection, and shall make a true report of the result of such inspection; and such report shall be recorded in a book to be kept at the mine for the purpose, and shall be signed by the persons who made the same. And if the report state the existence or apprehended existence of any danger, the person or persons making the inspection shall forthwith cause a true copy of the report to be sent to the inspector of the district: provided, always, that where the miners in any mine fail to appoint two of their number to inspect the mine, the chief inspector shall select from the men, in alphabetical order where possible, two competent miners, who shall comply with the provisions of this section, and the said owner, agent, or manager may withhold from the wages of the underground employees a sufficient sum pro rata to remunerate the persons making such examination.

They had reported upon the existence of inflammable gas in five working places. The quantity of gas was not stated. The amount of danger evidently was not specified but if the quantity of gas had been very great, the miners could have detected it at the time of the examination and they could have become aware of the fact if the mine had been in a dangerous condition. Why did they not forthwith, according to the provision of the Act, report it? Although that report was made in June, they allowed it to remain until July, before the report was sent down to the Department of Mines.

Now, I desire to say a word in regard to the discrimination against Messrs. Mottishaw and Portrey, which apparently was the initial cause of the strike at Cumberland in September, 1912. Mr. Mottishaw had finished his duties at the extension and there was no place ready for him. The facts are set forth in the following report:

On June 15, 1912, Isaac Portrey and Oscar Mottishaw, the gas committee appointed by the men, as laid down in the Act, reported having found gas in several places in the No. 2 mine at Extension. This report was forwarded to the Inspector of Mines, who verified the same in July, 1912.

Shortly after this report was issued Mottishaw's 'place' ran out, and it was discovered [Mr. Shepherd.]

that no other 'place' could be found for him. He left Extension and later arrived at Cumberland, where he obtained work with a contractor at one of the mines. After he had been there a short time the contractor was notified by the manager that Mottishaw must be discharged. The contractor objected, but was told that Mottishaw had to go, excuse or no excuse.

Realizing the insecurity of their position should they allow such a case of flagrant discrimination to occur without some protest on their part, a committee was appointed by the miners to interview the manager in connection therewith, but he refused to meet them. Another committee was sent with a like result. The miners then decided to declare a general holiday at all the mines in Cumberland on Monday, September 16, 1912, in order that this question might be discussed.

At the meeting, on the 16th, a committee was chosen, consisting of union and non-union miners, to again visit the managers. This committee met the same fate as the previous one.

On the miners returning to work on the morning of the 17th, they discovered notices at the mine entrances notifying them to take out their tools, the only condition under which they would be permitted to work being: That each man desiring to work could do so, provided that he signed an individual contract agreeing to work under the old conditions for a period of two years. Thus commenced the strike on Vancouver Island—by a lockout at the hands of the mine owners.

In reference to the charge of the hon. member for Carleton that I had been apathetic in the matter between June, 1911 and June 1912, while the Cumberland strike was on, let me say that the United Mine Workers had a conference in Nanaimo with the Cumberland representatives of the United Mine Workers and they asked me to attend and I did. I desired to the best of my ability to show them exactly where they stood in regard to the charge of discrimination against Mottishaw and Portrey. Portrey was not discharged but he was allowed to continue his work.

I told the convention that if they would lay a specific charge of discrimination, the Minister of Mines of British Columbia was compelled, by the provisions of this Act, to order an investigation. They told me they could not lay a specific charge, but they were morally sure that such was the case. I appealed to them again; I said to them: gentlemen, you are out of court, and unless you can formulate a specific charge and sustain it, the Minister of Mines cannot order an investigation. In support of what I told these men, that the Minister of Mines was compelled by the provisions of this Act to order an investigation, I want to tell this committee that whilst Chief Inspector of Mines of British Columbia I had occasion to lay several complaints with the hon. the