

CHAP. V—THE STRIKE AT UNION.

ON May 2, the miners in the employ of the Wellington Colliery Company at Union went on strike under circumstances somewhat similar to the Extension miners seven weeks before. A local of the Western Federation of Miners was formed at Union on April 5. Almost immediately after its formation one after the other of the officials of the union were dropped from the company's employ. This was not done in the way of a direct dismissal, but as their places in the mine were worked out, new places were not given to them. Before the end of the month the services of all the officers, of whom there were nine, with the exception of two, had been dispensed with in this way; also the services of other miners holding the offices of trustees of the union. On May 1, a committee of three of the union interviewed Matthews, the manager, and asked for a reinstatement of the men dismissed, in the order of their dismissal. This request Matthews refused, stating to the committee that as Mr. Duns-muir had refused to recognize any union, he was unwilling to do so. Notices were immediately posted, calling a meeting of the union for the following day. At the meeting the following resolution was carried: 'That because officers discharged after organization on April 5, we take a ballot on whether or not we stop work till such time as the officials and members who have been discriminated against by the Wellington Colliery Company are reinstated in their proper order, with full recognition of the Western Federation of Miners.' According to the return given by the secretary to the Commission, out of 208 votes cast on this resolution only 12 were opposed to it. As a result of this decision all of the miners in No. 4 mine quit work.

The Strike at Union part of a general intrigue.

The organization of the miners at Union into a union at this time, and the subse-

quent declaration of strike cannot, in our opinion, be accounted for except as part of the general scheme to tie up the coal supply on Vancouver Island, in aid of the U.B.R.E. strikers at Vancouver. The strike at Union was in reality a strike in sympathy with the men who were out at Lady-smith, and the manner in which this was procured cannot be too carefully considered, as illustrating, on the one hand, the secret and irresponsible nature of the inner workings of the Western Federation of Miners and the deceptive practices of some of its most prominent officials; and on the other, the comparatively simple manner in which a body of men may, at the instance of a few persons of ordinary adroitness and cunning, be drawn into a deplorable situation, from which they are unable to extricate themselves without humiliation and loss.

What the exact relations were at this time between Baker, the Canadian organizer of the Western Federation of Miners and Estes, the president of the United Brotherhood of Railway Employees, the Commissioners were unable to ascertain, owing to the absence of the latter from the country at the time the Commission was holding its sittings at Vancouver. However, the evidence obtained from many sources leaves no question as to the design of the Brotherhood and its president in attempting the stoppage of the coal supply from Vancouver Island, while the actions of the Canadian organizer of the Western Federation tend, on the whole, to indicate very clearly that he was a prime mover in the furthering of this design.

Efforts of U. B. R. E. to stop Coal Supply at Union.

Amongst other facts mentioned in the account already given of the efforts made by the strikers at Vancouver to stop the coal supply to the Canadian Pacific, it will be remembered that the telegram sent on