

CORRESPONDENCE

UNJUSTIFIABLE ATTACKS.

To the Editor of the Canadian Mining Journal:

Sir,—In the Coast cities of Victoria and Vancouver, British Columbia, persistent attacks have lately been made on Mr. Thos. Graham, Chief Inspector of Mines for the Province, and since the rules of the Provincial civil service do not permit of officials defending themselves in the public press, he is placed at a most unfair disadvantage. Now, since a number of newspapers have given publicity to misstatements and some have made serious reflections on Mr. Graham in regard to the way he has carried out his official duties, such reflections being based on false allegations, I ask you to be good enough to publish the following information, with the purpose of endeavoring to influence those who read it to suspend their judgment until such time as the findings of the Royal Commission lately appointed by the Government to make a thorough investigation of the circumstances surrounding the flooding three months ago of the South Wellington coal mine, on Vancouver island, and the resultant death of nineteen men, is arrived at and made known.

More than twenty years ago there was filed with the Department of Mines, Victoria, B.C., a tracing of a plan of the Southfield mine, then being operated by an Old Country company, whose engineers and surveyors followed the English custom of making plans on the scale of two chains—132 ft.—to the inch. In 1907 or 1908 a provincial syndicate or company undertook the development of a coal property adjoining the long abandoned Southfield mine. Its officials had free access to the tracing filed with the department and, as well, to the original plan in the offices at Nanaimo of the company that in 1902 acquired from the English company all its property in the Nanaimo district. Some years ago a law was passed in British Columbia requiring all coal mine plans to be on a scale of 100 ft. to the inch.

Mr. Graham took office as Chief Inspector of Mines on January 1, 1912, after having been for several years general superintendent for the Western Fuel Co., Nanaimo. The Coal Mines Regulation Act he has to administer, neither requires the Government mine inspectors to check up the surveys of mine operators nor does it give them power to do so under ordinary operating conditions. The responsibility for the accuracy of plans exhibited to the mine inspectors or filed with the department lies entirely with the operators. In the case of the South Wellington Company it is supposed that some one overlooked the difference in the scale of the old plan as compared with that of the plans of late years. This, however, has not yet been proved. In any case the mistake, if made, was not made by a Government official. This notwithstanding, a charge has been made by a lawyer, active in opposition to the political party in power in the province, according to reports printed in opposition newspapers, that the chief inspector brought into court two maps marked as on the same scale, when they were on different scales. As a matter of fact those maps were not produced by any Government official; on the contrary, the chief inspector had taken with him from Victoria to Nanaimo to produce at the inquest, if required, the tracing filed 23 years previously with the Department of Mines. Having at the outset of the inquest announced that it was the intention of

the Government to hold a full investigation after a resurvey of the mine had been made, he did not think it necessary to call the attention of the jury to maps that were not official. So it is that the political lawyer, opposition newspapers (particularly the labor publications), and strikers who failed in their fight against the coal mine operators, have combined in their denunciations of the chief inspector, whom I believe to be the most efficient and thoroughly conscientious man available for the responsible duties of his office.

To show the nature of the misrepresentation that has taken place, the following excerpts from reports of a Coroner's inquest are submitted:

From Opposition newspapers—

"Mr. Farris: 'You have known for over two months that the company had been working on plans drawn to different scales?'"

"Mr. Graham: 'Yes.'"

Mr. Farris: 'And when you posted up these two blueprints in court here, both marked 100 ft. to the inch, you knew that one of them was on a scale of 132 ft. to the inch?'"

"Mr. Graham: 'Yes.'"

"Mr. Farris: 'And you knew that everyone here in court was misled by that fact?'"

"The witness answered in the affirmative."

From sworn Stenographer's Report of Evidence taken:

"Q.: You knew this morning that the two plans did not agree, and yet you did not disclose it with us and the jury; how is that? What is your reason for not disclosing the difference between these plans—instead of leading us to believe they were the same?"

"A.: My reason for not doing so is because I did not see that it was necessary at a Coroner's inquest, since there will be another inquiry as soon as a resurvey is made."

"Q.: You think that is an obvious explanation?"

"A.: An obvious explanation."

"Q.: You intended to be silent during this inquest?"

"A.: I had no reason to bring it out."

"Q.: You thought it your duty as a Government official?"

"A.: Yes, sir."

The Vancouver Trades and Labor Council sent a delegation to the acting Premier of the province to ask for immediate removal from office of the chief inspector and that proceedings be taken against him for complicity in causing the deaths of 19 miners. These requests, pending the investigation of a Royal Commission, were refused.

Yours, etc.,

Victoria, B.C., June 1, 1915.

E. JACOBS.

OSCEOLA.

The report of Osceola Consolidated for the year ended Dec. 31, 1914, shows net earnings of \$352,586, or \$3.66 per share, which compares with \$381,967, or \$3.97 per share in previous year. Production amounted to 14,970,737 lb. of copper against 11,325,010 lb. in 1913. Cost of production was 10.79 cents per lb. against 12.30 cents in the previous year; rock yielded 13.5 lb. refined copper per ton against 15.4 lb. in 1913.