

Doings in Parliament

Clute Makes Well Considered Suggestions on Labor Questions.

Minister of Agriculture and the Copyright Act—Compliment to Sir Charles Tupper.

From Our Own Correspondent.

Ottawa, May 26.—The investigation by Mr. Clute into the grievances of the Slocan miners has resulted in a bulky, but interesting, report. There is to be said about Mr. Clute's work that he has done it very effectively. The report has not yet been printed, but in the typewritten document presented to the House of Commons, there are evidences of conscientious and careful work. Some resolutions which come down to parliament are usually a jumble of figures or words, and it is therefore refreshing to pick up a document from which, almost at a glance, one can grasp the salient points. The nature of the grievances is well known. The dispute arose over the hours of labor of the miners, the rate of wages, and the importation of aliens to take the place of the strikers. One can well understand the tremendous interest involved by local and provincial legislators in the extent of the mining industry in southern British Columbia which Mr. Clute gives as the number of men who were employed on the 1st of January last (coal mines excepted) at 4,500 men, and the amount of capital actually invested—\$20,000,000.

Mr. Clute secured a great deal of testimony from miners and mine owners, and with a view to preventing the actual stoppage of work in future, with the heavy losses it entails to both masters and men, he suggests the passage of a conciliation Act by the federal parliament. Conciliation boards would be appointed on the Slocan dispute, and in addition, Mr. Clute advises the appointment of a conciliator, who shall be clothed with powers, among others, to take evidence under oath. His first duty would be to bring the parties together, and to ascertain the nature of the differences between them. He would also have power to act where he deemed it advisable immediately on becoming aware of a strike, without formal request or other preliminary. This power is suggested in order to avoid any delay at the inception of labor troubles, which, unless prompt action is taken, often lead to the widening of a breach, and render future attempts at conciliation difficult, if not abortive. The conciliator, Mr. Clute thinks, should be given authority to advise, to assist, and to mediate between the representatives of the opposing parties. In these suggestions, there are the nucleus of a measure which would prevent such disastrous consequences to many an industry, such as has resulted to the miners of the Slocan district, to say nothing of the mining companies, during the past few months.

The Slocan miners are not altogether satisfied with his procedure. The department of agriculture, which has the administration of a good many branches, including the experiments in public health, dairying, trade marks, statistics, including the preparation of the annual year book, copyright, and the census, would think that with such a conglomerate of affairs the little minister would be satisfied, but it is not. His latest attempt to make himself more powerful in connection with the question of copyright. Canadian publishers have had a long fight to secure the right to print English copy-righted works in Canada. Canadian publishers have had a long fight to secure the right to print English copy-righted works in Canada.

Mr. Clute has before parliament an measure of a retrograde character. For years it has been the law in connection with patents in Canada that where a patent on an invention expires in a foreign country, ipso facto, it lapses in the Dominion. This was a fair provision, as it enabled Canadian inventors to utilize an invention simultaneously with any other country, after the inventor had had his full measure of protection for a term of years. Should Mr. Fisher's bill pass, a foreign inventor need not take out a patent in Canada for some years, and then when he has exploited the markets in other countries and his invention is about to become public property, he can come to Canada and monopolize the market here. There has never been any question as to the advantage of the present law, but Mr. Fisher proposes to amend it and place Canadians at a disadvantage, as compared with the rest of the world. When the provisions of

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