

him the whole file, so that it may not be necessary to copy a number of documents which would not serve the honourable gentleman's purpose.

The motion was agreed to.

The Senate adjourned until Wednesday, March 29, at 8 o'clock p.m.

THE SENATE

Wednesday, March 29, 1922.

The Senate met at 8 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.

Prayers and routine proceedings.

NEW SENATOR INTRODUCED

Hon. Arthur Charles Hardy, of Brockville, introduced by Hon. Raoul Dandurand and Hon. A. B. McCoig.

BRITISH EMPIRE STEEL CORPORATION LABOUR DISPUTE

DISCUSSION AND INQUIRY

Hon. CHARLES E. TANNER rose in accordance with the following notice:

That he will call attention to the matter of the wage disputes between the British Empire Steel Corporation and employees of the company in Nova Scotia, and the relations of the Department of Labour to the said matter, and will inquire:—1. What action the Department of Labour has taken in regard to the said matter since the Gillen Award was made.

2. Whether the Minister of Labour, or any officer of the department, has been personally in communication with the parties in the province of Nova Scotia.

3. Whether the Minister of Labour, or any officer of the department, has been invited by the representatives of the miners to visit the part of the province in which the disputes arose, and whether the minister, or any officer of his department accepted such invitation and visited the locality and conferred there with the parties to the dispute.

4. What other action has the Minister of Labour, or officer of his department, taken in regard to the matters?

5. When was the Gillen Award made?

6. At what times did the Minister of Labour, or officers of his department visit Nova Scotia for the purpose of conferring in the said matters?

He said: Honourable gentlemen, my object in asking these questions is to ascertain how far the Department of Labour has intervened for the purpose of bringing about a settlement of these labour difficulties, which have assumed very alarming proportions.

These difficulties have existed for a considerable time. In December last there was an agreement, called the Montreal

agreement, made between the workingmen and the management of the Dominion Coal and Steel Company in regard to wages. That agreement apparently was not satisfactory to the company, and I do not know that it was very satisfactory to the men. At all events, disputes arose out of it, with the result that a Board of Conciliation was constituted in the latter part of December, I think; but the company refused to be a party to that Board, with the result that the Department of Labour was called upon to appoint two of the arbitrators, the mine workers appointing the third. A gentleman of the name of Gillen, I believe from Toronto, was the chairman of that Board of Arbitration. The Board sat in Halifax during January, and made an award. Mr. Gillen and the other gentleman appointed by the Department of Labour, Col. Thompson, agreed upon certain reductions of wages. The gentleman who was appointed by the mine workers differed with them in regard to the reductions, claiming that what they proposed was entirely too great.

I might mention, however, in passing, that the three arbitrators unanimously agreed upon a statement, which I think has some significance as far as Nova Scotia and the cost of coal in that province are concerned. After having had an opportunity of examining the cost-sheets of the company—these were not produced at the arbitration for the examination of the mine workers representative, but were shown to the arbitrators privately—the three arbitrators agreed in the statement that there was too much spread between the cost of production and the cost to the consumer of the coal which the company was placing upon the market. In plain language, as I understand that, and as a good many other people in Nova Scotia understand it, it means that the company is taking too much profit; and at the same time, they are seeking to make very drastic reductions in the pay of the men who work in the mines.

I may further say that there is a general opinion, and I think it exists among the miners themselves, who are of a reasonable state of mind, that there should be some reduction in wages. On the other hand, it is very questionable whether the majority of the Board of Arbitrators, particularly under the circumstances which I have just mentioned, did not go too far. I have had a good many years experience among the mine workers of Nova Scotia, and I want to say that generally speaking, they are a body of men of more than ordinary intelligence. After having had some twenty or twenty-five years direct connection with