

Reports of Royal Commission in Disputes between the Dominion Coal Company, Limited, and Employees at Glace Bay and Springhill, and the Nova Scotia Steel and Coal Company, Limited, and Employees at Sydney Mines

IN the April and May numbers of the *Labour Gazette* references have been made to two applications for Boards of Conciliation and Investigation under the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act, 1907, which were received from employees of the Dominion Coal Company, Limited, in the Glace Bay colliery district, the employees concerned being in one case members of the Provincial Workmen's Association. In both cases the disputes related to wages but in the former case the recognition of the United Mine Workers of Nova Scotia was also involved. One of the officers of the Department visited the locality and succeeded in arranging a number of the differences between the parties concerned. In view of the division between the employees with respect to trades unionship, some being in one union, and some in the other, it was thought this situation could be best dealt with by the appointment of a Royal Commission. A Royal Commission was accordingly appointed by Order in Council dated April 19, 1917, to make such recommendations as in the opinion of the commissioners may serve to promote amicable relations between said company and its employees, and may be calculated to remove or lessen the existing friction. The Royal Commission was composed of His Honour Judge Joseph A. Chisholm, Judge of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia; Rev.

John Forrest, D.D., Halifax, N.S.; and Mr. John T. Joy, President of the Halifax Longshoremen's Association, Halifax, N.S.

While the dispute at Glace Bay was under inquiry the Minister received word of difficulties between the Dominion Coal Company and its employees at Springhill, and the Commission was authorized to extend its inquiry to the point named. Later, the Minister learned that differences existed also as between the Nova Scotia Steel and Coal Company and its employees at Sydney Mines, and the powers of the Commission were extended to permit inquiry also in this dispute. The inquiry at Sydney Mines was taken immediately after the close of the investigation at Glace Bay and the inquiry at Springhill followed a few days later. It is satisfactory to state that the Royal Commission was able in each case to arrange the differences in question and in two cases to secure a working agreement between the employing Company and its workmen.

The terms of the Commission required that the inquiry be conducted so far as possible on the lines of an inquiry under the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act, 1907. It is thought desirable, therefore, to include in the present article the text of the Orders in Council relative to the Royal Commission and of the findings in the case of each inquiry, treating

the inquiries in this respect also as if they had taken place before a Board of Conciliation and Investigation.

Text of Orders in Council.

P. C. 1102.

Certified copy of a Report of the Committee of the Privy Council, approved by His Excellency the Governor General on the 19th April, 1917.

The Committee of the Privy Council have had before them a report, dated 19th April, 1917, from the Minister of Labour, representing that, whereas there is considerable unrest in the mining industry carried on by the Dominion Coal Company, Limited, in the Province of Nova Scotia, and there is reason to believe that such unrest may result in serious injury to public interests;

Therefore, with a view to the establishment of more harmonious and satisfactory relations between the said company and its employees in question, it is advisable that an inquiry be made into and concerning such unrest and the nature and causes thereof.

The Minister, therefore, recommends that it be referred to a Commission under the provisions of Part I of Chapter 104, Revised Statutes of 1906, commonly called the Inquiries Act, composed of His Honour Judge Joseph A. Chisholm, Judge of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia; Rev. John Forrest, D.D., Halifax, N.S.; and John T. Joy, President Halifax Longshoremen's Association, Halifax, to hold and conduct such inquiry, with all the powers conferred by the foregoing statute upon the commissioners.

The Minister further recommends that the commissioners have the right to determine the manner of conducting the proceedings in respect of such inquiry and to make inquiries and investigation concerning the relations between said company and its employees in the said industry, with a view to making such recommendations as in their opinion may serve to promote amicable relations between said company and its employees and may be calculated to remove or lessen the friction now existing.

The Minister further recommends that the said Judge Chisholm be appointed Chairman of the said Commission, and that the report of the commissioners be presented to the Minister of Labour.

The Minister further recommends that all fees and expenses payable to the commissioners, or to witnesses or other persons who may under their authority be concerned in the proceedings of the Commission, shall be governed by the provisions as to such matters of the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act, 1907, as if the Commission had been a

Board of Conciliation and Investigation established under that statute.

The Committee concur in the foregoing recommendation and submit the same for approval.

(Sgd.) RODOLPHE BOUDREAU,
Clerk of the Privy Council.

P. C. 1278.

Certified copy of a Report of the Committee of the Privy Council, approved by His Excellency the Governor General on the 7th May, 1917.

The Committee of the Privy Council have had before them a report, dated 4th May, 1917, from the Minister of Labour, stating—with reference to P.C. 1102,—that whereas information received shows unrest in the coal mining industry in the Province of Nova Scotia to concern other collieries than those controlled by the Dominion Coal Company and there is reason to believe that such unrest may result in serious injury to the public interest, it is desirable that the Commission appointed under P.C. 1102 be authorized to extend its enquiries and recommendations to such other points in the Province of Nova Scotia as may be determined by the Minister of Labour and it is recommended that the powers and authorities of the Commission be extended accordingly.

The Committee concur in the foregoing recommendation and submit the same for approval.

(Sgd.) RODOLPHE BOUDREAU,
Clerk of the Privy Council.

Report of Inquiry at Glace Bay

To the Honourable
T. W. Crothers, K.C., M.P.,
Minister of Labour,
Ottawa.

Sir,—

The undersigned, members of the Royal Commission appointed to make an investigation into the unrest in the mining industry carried on by the Dominion Coal Company Limited, in the Province of Nova Scotia and the nature and cause thereof, have the honour to report as follows:

We began our investigation at Glace Bay in the morning of Wednesday, the second day of May, 1917, and spent Wednesday and Thursday in conference with the representatives of the Provincial Workmen's Association and of the United Mine Workers of Nova Scotia, hearing oral statements of their contentions, first with one body and then with the other, and finally with both bodies jointly. On Friday, May 4th, we had a series of conferences with the representatives of the

two labour organizations and the officials of the Dominion Coal Company, Limited, and late on Friday night we made an adjudication, which was accepted by the representatives of all the parties represented.

We found causes of the unrest in the collieries of the Glace Bay district to be principally two.

First, a feeling of discord resulting from the presence in the same field of two rival labour organizations. This feeling interfered in many ways with the successful prosecution of the industry in the different collieries, and produced widespread friction and irritation. The Commission was able to persuade the leaders of the two organizations to agree to the establishment of a new organization, which is intended to absorb the membership of the two existing ones and we believe that in due course this scheme will be carried into effect to the advantage of both employers and employees as well as of the community. The Commission gave its unqualified approval to the proposition.

The other cause of unrest was the matter of wages. After hearing all the parties at considerable length, the Commission determined to recommend that the following increases should be made subject to the conditions hereinafter set forth:

1.—That ten cents a day be added to the wages of all workmen who are at present receiving wages up to and including \$2.50 per day.

2.—That an increase of 12 per cent be given to all workmen including those mentioned in the foregoing paragraph No. 1.

3.—That the said increase date from the first day of May, 1917.

4.—That the scale of wages thus adjudged should continue in force until the 31st day of December, 1917, and from year to year thereafter until any of the parties give notice of its termination, two months prior to the expiration of any calendar year.

This recommendation or determination of the commission was accepted by the representatives of the various parties, subject, as already stated, to ratification by the bodies they represented, and a copy of the agreement accepting the same is attached to this Report.

There were a few questions of minor importance discussed at the said conferences; and it was agreed that they could be satisfactorily adjusted by the Company and the workmen without the intervention of the Commission.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

(Sgd.) J. A. CHISHOLM,
Chairman.

(Sgd.) JOHN FORREST,

(Sgd.) JNO. T. JOY.

Sydney, Nova Scotia, May 5, 1917.

Memorandum of settlement arrived at of questions in dispute between the Dominion Coal Company, Limited, and the representatives of the Provincial Workmen's Association and of the United Mine Workers of Nova Scotia, the said settlement having been arrived at during the course of its reference to the Royal Commission appointed to investigate the said questions. It is agreed:

1. That 10 cents a day be added to the wages of all workmen who are at present receiving wages up to and including \$2.50 per day.

2. That an increase of 12½ per cent be given to all workmen, including those mentioned in paragraph (1) hereof.

3. That said increases date from the first day of May, 1917.

4. This agreement shall continue in force until the thirty-first day of December, 1917, and from year to year thereafter, unless any of the parties hereto give notice of its termination two months prior to the expiration of any calendar year.

In witness whereof the said parties have hereto subscribed their names.

For Dominion Coal Company, Limited:

(Sgd.) D. H. MACDOUGALL,

General Manager.

(Sgd.) S. B. MCNEIL,

G.M., P.W.A.

(Sgd.) JOHN MOFFATT,

Sec., P.W.A.

(Sgd.) SILBY BARRETT,

Pres., U.M.W. of N.S.

(Sgd.) J. B. McLACHLAN,

Sec., U.M.W. of N.S.

The above agreement is the finding of the commissioners on the matters therein dealt with.

(Sgd.) J. A. CHISHOLM,

Chairman.

(Sgd.) JOHN FORREST.

(Sgd.) JOHN T. JOY.

Glace Bay, N.S., May 4, 1917.

Report of Inquiry at Sydney Mines

To the Honou ble
Thomas V. Crothers, M.P.,
Minister of Labour,
Ottawa.

Sir,—

The commissioners appointed to enquire into the unrest in the mining industry carried on by the Nova Scotia Steel and Coal Company, Limited, at Sydney Mines in the Province of Nova Scotia beg to report as follows:

The commissioners held meetings at the Town Hall, Sydney Mines, on May 7, 9, 10 and 11, and heard the evidence of 23 witnesses for the miners and three witnesses for the company.

The dispute in this colliery district is entirely with respect to wages.

After carefully hearing all the evidence, oral and documentary, and the representations and arguments made by all the parties, and with a view of establishing more satisfactory relations between the said company and its miners at this colliery, we respectfully recommend as follows:

That after the present percentage bonus is changed to a regular rate, as we recommend, the following increases be made in the wages of the miners:

1. Ordinary labourers to receive \$2.10 a day;
2. Other classes of labour, now receiving \$2.50 or less a day, and the hoisting engine men, to receive an increase of 15 per cent;
3. All classes now receiving from \$2.51 to \$3.00 a day to receive an increase of 10 per cent;
4. All classes now receiving \$3.01 a day and upwards to receive an increase of five per cent;
5. All hand pick miners to receive an increase of seven and a half per cent;
6. All shooters and loaders to receive an increase of seven and a half per cent; and
7. Machine runners to receive an increase of five per cent.

We further recommend that this scale take effect from the seventh day of May, 1917, and continue from year to year thereafter unless and until either party, two months prior to the expiration of any calendar year, give the other notice of its intention to terminate the same at the expiration of such calendar year.

Dated this fourteenth day of May, 1917.

(Sgd.) JOSEPH A. CHISHOLM,
Chairman of Commissioners.

(Sgd.) JOHN FORREST,

(Sgd.) JNO. T. JOY,
Commissioners.

Report of Inquiry at Springhill

In the matter of the unrest at the collieries operated at Springhill, Nova Scotia, by the Dominion Coal Company, Limited.

To the Honourable

T. W. Crothers, M.P.,
Minister of Labour,
Ottawa.

Sir,—

We, the undersigned, members of the Royal Commission appointed to investigate the unrest existing at the collieries of the Dominion Coal Company at Springhill, Nova Scotia, have the honour to report that we visited Springhill on Thursday, the seventeenth day of May, 1917, and had several conferences with the representatives of the company and of the coal workers. After a full investigation of the facts and hearing what was alleged by the

parties to the dispute, we respectfully make the following recommendations:

That the schedule agreed upon between the company and the workmen on the ninth day of April, 1917, be continued, subject to the following supplementary articles, namely:

1. That the company, where pillars are over 35 feet thick, give the workmen an increase of 2 cents a ton for shovelling down coal; and in cases where the pillars are 50 feet or upwards in thickness, the company, in addition to the 2 cents a ton, give \$2.00 a shift for such shovelling. Also that the company should split pillars which are sixty feet or upwards.

The above additions are not to apply where the angle is 35 degrees or more.

2. Where it can be avoided the putting of three or more men in a pillar shall be discontinued.

3. All wages shall be fixed by a flat rate.

4. The steady work bonus shall be continued, and two and a half per cent bonus shall be paid for 21 days' work in a period of four weeks.

5. This arrangement to date from the ninth day of April, 1917, and to continue in force until the thirty-first day of December, 1917, and from year to year thereafter, unless and until either of the parties, two months before the expiration of any calendar year, give the other notice of its intention to terminate the same at the expiration of such calendar year.

We beg further to report that after the members of the Commission agreed upon the above recommendations, the parties to the dispute accepted the same, subject to ratification by the bodies they represented; and that such acceptance was signified by a memorandum of agreement, a true copy of which is appended to this report.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

(Sgd.) JOSEPH A. CHISHOLM,
Chairman.

(Sgd.) JNO. T. JOY,

(Sgd.) JOHN FORREST,
Commissioners.

Dated at Halifax, this eighteenth day of May, 1917.

A true copy.

(Sgd.) J. A. CHISHOLM,
Chairman of Commission.

Memorandum of agreement made and entered into this seventeenth day of May, 1917, between the Dominion Coal Company, Limited, of the one part, and the Citizens' Committee of Springhill, of the other part.

Witnesseth, that the schedule of wages dated the ninth day of April, 1917, be continued, and that the following articles be added to and made supplementary thereto and be deemed to form part of the agreement:

1. Where pillars are over 30 feet in thickness, the company will give an increase of 2 cents a ton for shovelling down coal; and, in addition to the said increase of 2 cents a ton, the company, in cases where the pillar is 50 feet or over, will give \$2.00 a shift for such shovelling. Pillars 60 feet or over will be split.

The above additions are not to apply where the angle is 35 degrees or over.

2. Where it can be avoided the putting of three or more men in a pillar will be discontinued.

3. All wages will be paid by a flat rate.

4. The steady work bonus will be continued, and two and a half per cent bonus will be paid for 21 days' work in a period of four weeks.

5. This agreement shall date from the ninth day of April, 1917, and continue to the thirty-first day of December, 1917; and from year to year thereafter unless and until either of the parties, two months before the expiration of any calendar year, gives the other party notice of its intention to terminate the same at the expiration of such calendar year.

In witness whereof the said parties by their representatives have executed this agreement the day and year first above written.

Signed in the presence of:

(Sgd.) J. C. NICHOLSON.

For the Dominion Coal Company, [L.S.]

Limited:

(Sgd.) ALFRED J. TONGE,

Mines Manager.

For the Citizens' Committee: [L.S.]

(Sgd.) KENT FOSTER,

Chairman, Citizens' Committee.

[NOTE.—There is a slight variation between the recommendation of the Commission and the memorandum of agreement in the increase under the terms of clause 2. Whereas the recommendation of the Commission is 12 per cent, the memorandum of agreement states 12½ per cent. It is thought desirable to indicate that the variation is intended and not accidental; the 12½ per cent increase prevails.—*Ed. L. G.*]