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NANAIMO COAL STRIKE AND CAUSES WHICH LED TO IT

(Continued from Page 1)

must occur. It did and after the terrible scenes of Black Friday when the wail of the Death March sounded throughout the little mining camp from dawn until well after dark, the men decided to form a union. They did so. It was not a foreign union nor was it affiliated with any Canadian or International body. It was to be a simon pure Canadian union with head offices at Ladysmith.

The union struggled on manfully for a brief time, but it had no power, nor could it finance a strike. This was first realized when the McKinnell incident arose. As related in the News many times, David McKinnell, a mine foreman, discharged a fireman for doing his duty in reporting all of the gas that he discovered below ground. McKinnell lost his certificate of competency, but it was handed back to him by the Minister of Mines prior to the last provincial election.

Again the infant organization wished to go out in protest when Donald McLean, the most proficient miner in the province, a graduate of Edinburgh University, was discharged and blacklisted, because he attended, with two others, and at the request of the Deputy Minister of Mines and Chief Inspector, a conference at Victoria to make suggestions to be incorporated in the Coal Mines Regulation Act. The men felt that the department of mines should have protected the man to whom a special invitation was given, but nothing was done.

On March 12, 1912—just prior to the last election, a terrific explosion occurred in the workings of the Diamond Vale Colliery at Merritt. A number of men were killed. An inquest was held; it was adjourned, and again adjourned, and on the day following the election its findings were given out. The death of the miners was laid at the door of the department of mines.

Speaking at Ladysmith on March 23, the Minister of Mines, Premier McBride, said: "If there is one man in this room following that hazardous occupation beneath ground, who has the slightest reason to think that the mines are not being conducted to insure to the utmost the safety of his life, let him come to me. If necessary I will close down those mines for a year and make a thorough and searching investigation."

Along in July 1912, Oscar Mottishaw was refused a new place at Extension. He went to Cumberland, where he was discharged by orders of the Canadian Collieries (Dunsmuir) Ltd., a subsidiary concern of the Canadian Northern. He had obtained a job with a contractor in the mine, and the contractor was told that he must discharge him. Mottishaw concluded that he had been black listed because at Extension he had acted on a gas committee. A gas committee is a committee appointed and paid by the men to make an inspection of the mine following the regular firemen and thus prevent a recurrence of the McKinnell incident. This work is undertaken turn about by the men.

The Canadian union which the men had formed had in the mean time been absorbed by the United Mine Workers of America, and Mottishaw brought his trouble before them. It was decided to lay off work until the matter could be brought before the Minister of Mines. The miners at Ladysmith did the same thing and a delegation went to Victoria to see the minister. All that they asked for was an investigation No demands were made at the time for any recognition of the union, shorter hours or increased pay. All that they asked for was an investigation into the charges that they made that the mines were not being conducted to preserve the safety of life. The investigation was refused, either under the Coal Mines Regulation Act or under the provisions of the Public Inquiries Act.

After being out two months the men declared that any agreement must be predicated upon recognization of the union. This the mine owners refused and in concert with the government have steadily refused to concede anything to the men at all, but are employing strikebreakers brought under contract from United States and Chinese.

When the men foolishly rioted and criminally broke the law last year, 1,000 militia men were thrown into the district. They were needed there. Over 200 miners were arrested and the cost to the government was over $50,000 to send the majority of them to jail. To those who watched the events last year it was evident that the authorities were actuated by motives other than those of justice in dealing with the miners. This was evidenced in one instance when Israel I. Rubinowitz, the miners' lawyers, was thrown into jail. Since that time the Government has persistently ignored the strikers while the mine owners have crushed out the last particle of independence the men had left. The only retribution now left to the miners is their vote on election day, and they are sure to use that against the McBride Government.

BELLA COOLA AND DISTRICT

(Bella Coola Courier)

The first shipment of sockeye salmon went south on the Camosun this week.

* * *

It is a well known fact that all the trails in the adjacent part of the interior have been made by Indians.

* * *

Considerable improvement to the school building and grounds in the Mackenzie school district is to be undertaken.

* * *

Late arrivals from the upper country state that great improvement has been made to the trails by the Indians of Alcatcho, Anaham Lake and Clusksu Lake.

* * *

The sockeye salmon fishing in local waters shows an encouraging improvement. The pack up to date exceeds that of any other year, except one, in the history of the local cannery.

* * *

A local syndicate who intend going into the ranching business at the head of South Bentick Arm are having a large scow built for the purpose of transporting a number of young cattle to the ranch. The scow is being constructed by Capt. Thorson.

* * *

The recent wet weather has caused considerable loss to several local farmers who were unfortunate enough to have their hay laying in the fields. The welcome change, however, will no doubt save the situation and there will be no shortage of hay this winter.

* * *

F. S. Brewer, of Ootsa Lake, formerly a frequent visitor to Bella Coola, had the misfortune to contract scurvy whilst engaged in trapping last winter. Mr. Brewer is now able to move around on crutches and hope is entertained for his complete recovery.

* * *

Tom Englebretson, the well known cattle rancher at Towdistan, brought down a fine bunch of steers which are to be butchered. The animals arrived here in excellent condition in spite of the fact that the trail is extremely difficult to drive cattle over. Were it not for this fact, many of the Chilcotin ranchers would ship their cattle by way of this port.

* * *

News has reached Bella Coola from the upper country that a strong syndicate of businessmen from the outside has been formed for the purpose of stocking a large tract of land in the neighborhood of Anaham Lake with cattle. Men are already in the country endeavoring to buy cattle and making preparations for the cutting and putting up hay. It is expected that the ranch will be in full operation this fall.

* * *

It is strange yet true that the spring salmon in these waters average considerably larger than at many places on the coast. Hereabouts they are of a fairly uniform size, weighing from thirty-five to forty pounds. The largest caught this season weighed fifty-two pounds. While quite a large fish, this does not approach the record of three years ago when a local fisherman took to the cannery one weighing seventy-five pounds.

* * *

This year the government intend to spend a paltry three hundred dollars on interior trails in the country tributary to Bella Coola, but while the powers that be are searching for a good Conservative to do the work (no matter whether he knows the country or not) a few Indians are doing in a few weeks what would take the Government months and cost the public thousands of dollads.

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