

## REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

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### WELLINGTON STRIKE.

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April 11th, 1891.

MR. SPEAKER :

Your Select Committee appointed to enquire into the cause that led to the late strike or lock-out at the Wellington coal mines, with power to send for persons and papers, beg to report as follows, viz. :—

That they have held four meetings, two of which took place at Wellington, and two at the Parliament buildings here. That they examined thirteen witnesses for the miners, and twelve for the management of the Wellington mines, and after careful enquiry are of the opinion that the primary cause of the strike at Wellington in May last, was the desire of the miners to be recognised as an organization known as Miners and Mine Labourers Union, and the refusal of the management of the Wellington Collieries to recognise or treat with such an organization.

THOS. KEITH,

*Chairman.*

## EVIDENCE.

WELLINGTON, 21st March, 1891.

Meeting of the Select Committee, appointed by the Legislative Assembly of B.C., to enquire into the circumstances which led up to the strike, or lock-out, of the coal miners employed at Wellington.

Present :—Messrs. Keith (Chairman), Semlin, Forster, and Booth.

Mr. E. V. Bodwell appeared on behalf of the owners of the Wellington Collieries.

Mr. Tully Boyce, by special leave of the Committee, represented the union miners.

Mr. TULLY BOYCE, called and sworn. (Examined by the Chairman.)

1. Q.—What do you know about the causes, which led up to this strike ?

A.—As a matter of fact, from the office I hold, a great many of these matters came under my notice and, as far as I know, the cause of the strike is that the Company refuses to recognize their workmen as an organized body. The question of hours, if I understand it properly, is entirely out of the question, and the cause of the strike, from first to last, is for recognition of a union among the men. The question of hours was the direct cause, in other words, hastened the conflict ; but that, as an outsider, I didn't think there would be any trouble about, for it was a matter about which there was very little at stake. As to the necessity of the men having an organization, I must come back to my personal experience—I worked for this company over two years ago ; two years last June, I believe ; there was a partial organization existing here then and, through the efforts of that organization, some of the grievances which existed amongst the men were removed. One of the grievances that I found there was that the miners had to cut their timbers outside. There was only one saw at each mine for to cut those timbers.

2. Q.—Was that a usual thing in the mines in the district ?

A.—I don't know that ; I had only just come into the district from the States. It was a very unusual thing to me.

3. Q.—Has that any connection with the strike ?

A.—I believe it is one of the things which make the necessity for an organization, so that the men can protect themselves ; as to the timbers, it is necessary that the men should be supplied with them and not have to cut them themselves—as they run great dangers through having to cut them. One result of that partial organization was the removal of that difficulty ; the company agreed to cut them, on a demand made by the men, and had them cut afterwards.

4. Q.—The company agreed to cut the timbers ?

A.—After an organized effort on the part of the men ; a partial organization.

5. Q.—And they were cutting those timbers when you left Wellington ?

A.—Yes. I am merely stating it to show that the men should have an organization for the purpose of having their difficulties removed. I found another cause of complaint, which required an organized effort to remove it, and that was the weight of the boxes. The standard for the boxes was 1,500 lbs—no matter how much over 1,500 lbs you put on, you got nothing for it. We came to the conclusion that the standard should be higher than that—that the boxes held more. By an organized effort we put on check weighmen, and got the standard raised to 1,650 lbs.—a raise of 150.

6. Q.—Mr. Booth : This was accomplished by an organization ?

A.—By a partial organization—then, up to the first of January, I believe it was, there was a little strike on here.