

Free Press,

Calvin strikes
Oct. 1/31

SLOAN IS BLAMED FOR ESTEVAN TROUBLE

Free Press
Sen. Robertson Says Calgary
Mine Workers' President
Fed Men With Discontent.
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Both Governments Receive
Censure from U.F.M. in Sas-
katoon for Delaying Action

(Canadian Press Despatch.)

Regina, Sept. 30.—Direct blame for much of the trouble in the Estevan coal fields leading up to the present strike and culminating in Tuesday's tragic riots, is laid by Senator G. D. Robertson, federal minister of labor, on James Sloan, of Calgary, president of the Mine Workers' union, and his associates, including a woman, Mrs. Alex. Boruk.

Replying to criticisms of his government for not taking action earlier, the senator, in an interview here today, said the striking miners themselves precluded the possibility of such action by breaking the law in quitting work without first asking for a board of conciliation.

After questioning the authenticity of many reports concerning the origin and history of the strike, Senator Robertson said that some months ago the Mine Workers' organizer, who had been active in Alberta, came to Saskatchewan to form a branch of the union here. He fed the flames of discontent and made statements, not yet authenticated, as to the men's grievances. The present strike followed.

"The fact is," said the minister of labor, "the action of the men in going on strike without first asking for a board of conciliation, was illegal. The department of labor at once offered its services through a conciliation officer in an effort to bring the parties together."

No further action could be taken, continued the senator, until the men returned to work and came within the law once more. As a result the department's chief conciliation officer, M. S. Campbell, was sent to Estevan to reason with the miners and for a few days met with apparent success. No further progress was met with, however, owing to the attitude of the strike leaders, and it was decided to appoint Judge Wylie, of Estevan, as a commissioner under the Industrial Trades Disputes Inquiry act, in the hope that his position and influence would alter the situation.

On Monday, said the minister, he interviewed Judge Wylie, giving him a free hand and appointing W. Perkins, of Estevan, as counsel to bring out the facts.

"It is my view," Senator Robertson stated, "that the men probably have some grievances, but they should have submitted them in a legal way so that a proper inquiry could be made. I believe, however, that the men as individuals are not at all unruly or unfair, but that they are very badly advised by their leaders, Sloan, Scarlett and the woman Boruk, whose activities were very undesirable and of no advantage to the men.

"I notice, too, that on the whole the leaders responsible for the unrest have a way of finding safety in absence when real trouble starts."

"It is to be hoped," he concluded "that as a result of the inquiry now under way the men will return to work pending a permanent settlement and restore the status quo."