

Regina Star

Sept. 8/31

## Alberta Agitators Cause of Troubles Officials Declare

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400 Men Now Believed Idle as  
Eight Mines Idle Monday  
Morning

ESTEVAN, Sept. 8.—Although provincial government officials have suggested miners and operators make application to Ottawa for a board of conciliation under the Industrial Disputes Act, no action had been taken at noon, Tuesday.

Word to this effect was given The Star late Tuesday afternoon. Under the Industrial Disputes Act the provincial government is prevented from taking any active part in the strike arbitration, although officers of the provincial government have lent what assistance possible.

ESTEVAN, Sept. 8.—Negotiations between miners and operators reached a climax Tuesday morning when about 400 men in the southern Saskatchewan coal field walked out "on strike."

A final meeting between operators and miners was held Monday night. When operators failed to comply with the demands of the miners, the latter indicated that they would not appear at the mines in the morning. Tuesday morning found their threat made good.

Threatened trouble, which was exclusively forecast in The Star last week arose over dissatisfaction with company stores, housing and boarding house arrangements, weights on which the miners are paid and wages.

Communist workers from Alberta who have been in the field during the past week although not actively voicing their opinion during the meetings are alleged to have been working silently among the men. Government investigation of the sudden appearance in the Estevan coal area of communist propaganda, resulted in the discovery of many copies of the communist paper "The Worker."

Miners and operators have been negotiating since Thursday, and meetings have been held daily. About nine major mines are said to be affected. Thos. M. Molloy, deputy minister of railways, labor and industries, attended the meetings on behalf of the government during Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

In an interview with The Star, Tuesday, Hon. J. A. Merkley, minister of railways, labor and industries, indicated that the matter would now lie with the federal government under a federal statute dealing with wage earners and employees. He supposed that the operators would communicate with the federal government on the matter.

Dissatisfaction with the method of payment is one of the major matters upon which the miners and operators have arbitrated during the week-end. The question has arisen as to whether payment should be made on weights before or after screening.

Miners also allege that prices and charges in company stores, houses and boarding houses are too high. Efforts have been made by the men to have these prices brought down. The question of wages is also being considered.

Hon. M. A. MacPherson, K.C., attorney-general, declined to make any comment as to whether the government planned to investigate the movements of Communist workers in the coal area, when interviewed by The Star.

Dealing with the situation, Tuesday, Premier Anderson said:

"The provincial government has been in touch with the situation in the Estevan and Souris coal-fields and the industrial dispute existing there.

"Through the department of labor efforts were made to bring the conflicting interests together. The jurisdiction of the province in settling industrial disputes was restricted by legislation passed in Saskatchewan in 1926, whereby it was enacted that the Dominion Industrial Disputes Investigation Act should apply to every industrial dispute of the nature defined in the Dominion Act.

"We are hopeful that the situation will not prove serious in that we are advised that the operators are prepared to make concessions and we believe the great body of men employed in the mines will be reasonable in their attitude."

Canadian Press

OTTAWA, Sept. 8.—Until striking miners in the Estevan, Sask., district return to work the Industrial Disputes Act cannot be invoked to deal with the situation, department of labor officials explained here Tuesday. The statute empowers the minister of labor to set up a board of conciliation to deal with disputes between employers and employees, but does not cover a situation where a strike has already been precipitated.

In many cases, however, employees on strike have been induced to return to work pending a decision by a board of conciliation which can then be set up. No official notice of the Estevan strike had reached the department early Tuesday.

SASKATOON, Sask., Sept. 8.—An appeal for relief for the 500 miners on strike in the Estevan district was received today by the head office of the Farmers' Unity League in Saskatoon. The branches of this organization are requested to send foodstuffs or cash addressed to the Mine Workers' Union of Canada there.