

Leader Post

Estevan

Strike

head

Oct. 9/31

HEAD OF MINE TELLS OF DEEP SEAM PLIGHT

J. R. Brodie Declares Men Getting Fair

Living Wage

VENTILATION OF MINE PROTESTED

Oct. 9/31 Dissatisfaction Over Medical Service by Owners Aired

(Special Despatch)

ESTEVAN, Sask., Oct. 8.—With the coal strike settled, and all mines operating full blast Thursday morning, the royal commission inquiry into the causes of the 30-day deadlock was resumed before His Honor Judge E. R. Wylie at the court house.

Deep Seam Plight Told

A picture of conditions facing the deep seam mines of the field was painted none too brightly by J. R. Brodie, of Winnipeg, vice-president of Bienfait Mines, Ltd., and a coal authority of note. Increasingly heavy competition threatened a complete extinction of the deep seam mines, he told the probe. As a possible salvation he advised heavier duties on American coal imports, a special tax on all strip mines to bring about an adjustment of selling prices and fairer consideration of lignite shippers by the federal authorities in respect to subventions.

Claims Wages Fair

Replying to charges already laid before the commission, Mr. Brodie stated that miners of the Bienfait-Estevan coal fields had been receiving pay on a "screen coal basis," which was supposed to include remuneration for timbering, removal of water seepage, and clearing away of "clay falls." He contended that the men had been getting a fair living wage, and announced that figures would later be submitted to the commission in support of this claim. He exhibited a chartered accountant's statement to show that his company would face a loss of approximately \$8,000 this year and stated that most of the mines in the field would fare worse.

Miners Testify

Five men in the employ of Bienfait Mines, Ltd., were heard during the day's session. Harry Hesketh, secretary of the Miners' Union, completed his evidence, and was followed by W. H. Muiarky, P. Marcellus, Wilfred Enmark and T. H. McWilliams. N. R. Craig, chairman of the Workmen's Compensation board, followed the proceedings closely. It is understood that, so far, no complaint has been registered with him by the miners. Further complaints were voiced regarding "black damp," a poisonous gas said by witnesses to be prevalent in the Bienfait mine. It generated in old workings, which should have been sealed off. It was injurious to the health of the miners, as were also the fumes of gunpowder charges which were not properly cleared from the air in the mine because the ventilating fan was not operated often enough.