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SOUTH MINE AREA WORKERS STAGE STRIKE

**ANNOUNCEMENT MADE
BY UNION PRESIDENT
AFTER MEETING**

**Provincial Officials Fail to
Bring Both Sides
Together**

(Special Despatch)

ESTEVAN, Sask., Sept. 8.—A general strike, completely tying up the lignite mines of the Estevan-Bienfait area, takes effect Wednesday morning. More than 600 men, members of the newly organized local branch of the Miners' Workers' Union of Canada, will be out of work this morning and 20 mines will be shut down. This was the announcement made at midnight by James Sloan of Calgary, Dominion president of the union, following a four-hour session with the local executive committee. Maintenance men only will remain at their posts.

Groups of working men waited outside the town hall, Monday night, until the executive meeting of the union, held behind closed doors, announced that the strike would go into effect. It is the first time in the history of the field that there has been a walkout, and the field is alive with rumors. Besides alleged "victimization" of the miners, there are stories of possible acts of violence if any of the mines attempt to defy the strike. At one camp armed guards have been posted to protect valuable machinery in case of such a demonstration.

Coal operators of the district did not attend a conference called by Sloan last Thursday night for consideration of grievances held by the miners, and for the purpose of reaching an agreement on hours, contract and day wage rates, and housing and working conditions in and around the mines. The attitude of the operators to the conference was expressed by one as follows:

Operators' Statement

"We will not meet Sloan or any other organization such as his that by his own statement boasts a direct connection with the entire Workers' Unity League and the Red Internationale of Soviet Russia. We have at any and all times, been willing to meet the employees of our company to discuss any grievances or complaints. This policy we will continue to follow, and welcome discussing matters of mutual interest."

Considering the situation at a special meeting last Thursday afternoon, the provincial cabinet ordered T. Molloy, deputy minister of labor, to make a complete investigation and to effect an adjustment if possible. Mr. Molloy came to Estevan immediately but was unable to bring operators and union executives together. The former reiterated their willingness to confer with employees of their

own companies or to meet a committee representing all the employees, but definitely refused to have anything to do with the organization of which Sloan is president. The union executive, on the other hand, would accept no alternative to a conference as suggested by them in the first place.

Second Letter

Sloan then addressed a second letter to the operators, calling another conference for last evening, and issuing a warning that unless the operators attended, their employees would cease work this morning. There was no reply, and the walkout has been ordered.

Discussing working conditions in the mines of the field, Sloan goes farther than blaming the operators, charging that the provincial government has been lax in its enforcement of the Mines act. He would not make public the detailed demands which the miners would submit to the operators, and members of the union executive are sworn to secrecy.

At public meetings he has branded conditions as "deplorable."

Makes Charges

"Miners were not getting credit for all the coal they dug; they were being cheated on the tally sheets; many were working 14 and 16 hours a day; they were forced to deal at mine company stores, where, Sloan charged, mistakes in addition of their accounts often cost them as much as \$10. Single men who lived in any place but the mine boarding house had to pay an overhead tax of \$1 a month. Steady workers were constantly in debt to the mining companies, and many of them had labored month in and month out without receiving any cash at all."