

Leader Post,

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COMPLAINTS OF BIENFAIT MINE WORKERS HEARD

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Wylie Royal Commission Com-
pletes Hearing of Evidence
of Bienfait Mines, Ltd.

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EXPECT TO COMPLETE
PROBE IN 30 DAYS

Mine Manager States He Had
Never Been Asked to Black-
list Any Miner

(Leader-Post Special Press Bureau)
ESTEVAN, Oct. 13.—Concluding
on Tuesday afternoon its hearing
of complaints of employees at Bien-
fait Mines Ltd. and the reply of
the management, the Wylie Royal
commission probe into the causes
leading up to the 30-day strike will
Wednesday morning turn its atten-
tion to the Eastern Collieries Ltd.
Each of the six deep seam mines in
the field will be treated in the same
manner, and indications are that
the investigation will be wound up
well within 30 days.

Jos. Bembridge, manager of the
Bienfait mine, occupied the witness
stand throughout Tuesday after-
noon, answering charges already
laid before the commission by the
company employees of poor ventila-
tion in the mine, "black-listing" of
discharged employees, no remunera-
tion for bailing water seepage, re-
moving clay falls and timbering,
and other grievances.

Slack Dockage
Examined by W. W. Lynd, K.C.,
he stated that when his men re-
turned to work following the
strike, the reduction for slack on
the tippie was set at 850 pounds to
each loaded car of coal. The
strikers claimed they had previous-
ly been docked 950 pounds on each
car. He also announced that the
limit of weight per car had been
placed at 4,500 pounds. This,
strikers declared in their evidence,
had been set at 4,000 pounds previ-
ously. The two changes in weight
are regarded by the strikers as notable
improvements. A further improve-
ment was the decision of the man-
agement to operate the mine venti-
lating fan through noon hours,
thus better clearing the air of
"black" damp and gunpowder
fumes, against which strong pro-
test had been made by the strikers.

Wet-Dry Entries
To questions put by W. J. Per-
kins, commission counsel, Bem-
bridge stated that he had never
received any "kick" from the men
regarding bailing out of water
seepage from the rooms in which
they were working. Men working
in such wet entries, he said, had
the advantage of cars to load as
fast as they could fill them, and
usually made more money than
their fellow-workers in dry entries.
The witness absolved the owners

of the mine from any blame be-
cause the miners had claimed they
were not paid for bailing and
pumping. He himself made any
extra allowances in pay for this
work, and if there were any
charges of underpay, he himself
was to blame.

"No man can say that I ever
fired a man for kicking about
things like that," Bembridge de-
clared. He had only discharged
one man during the time he had
occupied the managerial position,
and that man had later come back
and been reinstated. He had never
been asked by the mine owners to
"blacklist" a miner who had been
discharged from the service of an-
other mine in the field.