

MUNITIONS INDUSTRY INQUIRY.

Report of Commissioners Appointed by the Minister of Labour to Inquire into Certain Concerns in Toronto and Hamilton.

AS was mentioned in last month's issue of the *Labour Gazette*, a Royal Commission appointed on the recommendation of the Minister of Labour conducted during the month of April an inquiry into conditions in Toronto and Hamilton in industries connected with the production of munitions of war, the commissioners being His Honour Colin G. Snider, Hamilton, Senior Judge of the County of Wentworth; William Inglis, Toronto, manufacturer; and J. A. McClelland, Montreal, Vice-President of the International Association of Machinists.

The report of the Commission was received by the Minister during the month of May and copies of the same in printed form were immediately distributed among the manufacturers and workmen concerned. The text of the findings of the Commission is as follows:

To the Honourable
the Minister of Labour,
Ottawa.

The commissioners appointed by Royal Commission bearing date the eleventh day of April, in the year of Our Lord 1916, to make inquiries and investigation concerning the relations between employers and employees in the industries in Toronto and Hamilton producing munitions of war, began their inquiries, pursuant to appointment, at Toronto on Tuesday, the eighteenth day of April, 1916, and continued on subsequent days, hearing evidence, visiting and examining the said industries and

interviewing machinists and others working therein to such extent as was considered necessary by them and by the employers and employees interested to enable the commissioners to become fully conversant with the nature, extent and cause of the unrest existing and to make such recommendations as in their opinion may serve to promote amicable relations and to remove or lessen the friction which in some cases they have found does exist.

Subsequently, on the second day of May, 1916, and subsequent days by appointment, the commissioners, by similar means and to the same extent, made inquiries and investigation at Hamilton into the relations between employers and employees in that city in the industries producing munitions of war, and they find in Hamilton unrest exists of the same nature to much the same extent and due to the same causes as in Toronto.

The machinists and tool-makers are the only employees who appear to be dissatisfied, and their chief complaints are:

1. That the minimum rate paid per hour is not sufficient;
2. That the number of hours constituting a day's work should be nine hours instead of ten hours as at present prevails in several of these industries in Toronto and in practically all such industries in Hamilton;
3. That overtime should be paid for at the rate of time and a half;
4. That work on Sundays and holidays should be paid at the rate of double time;

A schedule of rules and rates in considerable detail was presented by the machinist employees belonging to labour organizations to each industry in both Toronto and Hamilton in which machinists and tool-makers are engaged, without regard to the manufacture of munitions of war, with a request to have an agreement entered into by the employers with their said employees embodying this schedule. In a considerable number of the industries in Toronto engaged in producing munitions of war as well as others not so engaged, such an agreement has been entered into, but in several large industries in Toronto and in all in Hamilton so engaged the employers have for various reasons given by them in the evidence taken by us refused to enter into it.

The commissioners, after hearing all parties, feel that they cannot recommend and they think that the machinists and tool-makers ought not to insist on the acceptance of this schedule as a whole during the continuance of the war in industries engaged in producing munitions of war.

The employees all expressed most loyally their readiness to work industriously for as many hours each day as they can stand in the production of the munitions of war as long as in the interest of the Empire's cause such effort on their part is needed, providing their demands as to wages, hours and overtime are reasonably met.

On the other side the employers, it appears to the commissioners, are quite willing to meet to a reasonable extent the wishes of the employees so far as the rate of wages per hour is concerned, and it seems probable that so far as the rate of pay for overtime is concerned no serious difficulty in most cases will be found to be in the way of an amicable adjustment. The chief difficulty in the

way of a settlement is as to the adoption of a nine hour day. As the men are willing to work as long as required and expect to work more than nine hours a day as long as necessary for the supply of munitions of war, this appears to the commissioners to be also a question of wages so far as this special work is concerned; that is, whether the tenth hour shall be paid at overtime rate or as straight time. From the employers' point of view it also involves the question of the adoption of a nine hour day after the war is over and in their regular factory work in peace times.

On this latter point the commissioners find difficulty in making a suggestion which will be likely to meet the views of both the employers and employees. The demand for a nine hour day which the commissioners find is really the true ground of the unrest is made by machinists and tool-makers belonging to organized labour and has no particular reference to industries producing munitions of war. It is a desire and an effort to establish generally in Canada nine hours as the recognized standard day's work. Of the machinists who gave evidence before us or were interviewed at the shops by us, those belonging to the unions and some others who do not so belong expressed a decided desire for the day's work to be limited to nine hours, even without overtime or Sunday work. A small minority of those who gave evidence and of those whom we interviewed in the shops, while in favour of a nine hour day in time of peace, were of opinion that the machinists ought not to raise this question during the continuance of the war. These men do not belong to the union. A few others expressed a desire for a ten hour day in order to get one hour more wages. These are also non-union men. The great majority of the machinists and tool-makers so engaged belong to organized labour.

The commissioners, however, venture to recommend the following arrangement of the points in difference:

1. That their suggestions be regarded as having reference only to the employees, machinists and tool-makers, engaged in the production of munitions of war and in making and repairing tools, implements, etc., required in such production and limited to the continuance of the war in which the Empire is now engaged, this being the limitation of duties and powers given by the Royal Commission under which this inquiry is being made.
2. That the minimum rate of pay for the machinists and tool-makers so engaged be 37½c and 42½c per hour respectively.
3. That overtime shall be paid for at the rate of time and one-half.
4. That time worked on Sundays and statutory holidays shall be paid at the rate of double time.
5. As to the request for the adoption of a nine hour working day the commissioners find themselves unable to join in a unanimous recommendation. Mr. William Inglis is of opinion that the difficulty of conducting the work of an industry partly on a nine hour day and partly on a ten hour day would be practically too unworkable, and that it would be equally difficult and unfair to expect industries only partly engaged in the production of munitions of war now running as ten hour day to change their whole business and calculation at a time when by the war and consequent scarcity of men their difficulties are increased. Mr. John A. McClelland and the chairman, from the evidence and the fact that the nine hour day has been adopted

by so many such industries without any difficulty to the management arising therefrom so far as has been discovered, recommend the adoption of nine hours as a day's work in such industries to the extent mentioned in paragraph 1 of these recommendations, stating, however, that there may be a few of these industries where special conditions of their general work may necessitate some other adjustment.

6. That in case any one or more of the employees so engaged in any such shop has or have any grievance, request, trouble or suggestion for consideration, the management of their shop shall at a reasonable time on request receive and hear a committee of not more than five of such employees, one of whom shall be the employee, or at least one of the employees, having the grievance or trouble, or desiring to make the request or suggestion, with a view to making an amicable adjustment or arrangement.

The notes of evidence taken by the stenographers of the Commission, together with the exhibits put in, are returned with and as part of this report.

All of which your commissioners have the honour to respectfully submit.

Dated at Hamilton this sixth day of May, A.D. 1916.

(Sgd.) COLIN G. SNIDER,

(Sgd.) WM. INGLIS,

(Sgd.) J. A. MCCLELLAND,

Commissioners.