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week'. 'What was it?' I asked. He shrugged his shoulders.

'He killed himself. It was Easter Eve. We had gathered in the student barracks and sang songs. He sang very loudly. Next morning he was dead. It was poison.'

'Do you know why he took it?' I asked.

'A letter probably', he replied. 'We found in his pocket one from a sister; it said, "Our mother went out five days ago to look for food. She has not returned, so we know that she is dead. Your sister and I are in bed, too weak to move. When you receive this we too shall be dead. We thought you would wish to know." We do not look on life as you do', he added.

The car stopped at the top of the hill and we got out and found another going down a side street to an old theatre which has been given by the Czech Government as barracks for the Russian refugee students. We pushed open the door; the body of the theatre and the stage were a sea of beds; between them was scarcely room to step. Behind the beds were wooden bars with a peg for the possessions of each man. The place was full; some slept, others squatted on their beds, books or drawing-boards before them, trying to study. Some looked up and bowed, some paid no attention, others were ready to talk—French or English.

'I came from Constantinople', said one. 'The Government provides barracks, food, some clothing, and we are admitted to the Czech University. It is possible to continue our studies here. Perhaps two thousand of us receive this government ration. There are others without it; we are the fortunate ones.'

Another was reading a letter. He looked up.

'From Russia', he said. 'We get news occasionally, perhaps once in three months, those of us who have any one left to hear from. We would rather hear, yet it cannot be good news; it is better to know, yet we cannot do anything. We have nothing to send; we are not permitted to return. We cannot find work.'

Here is the tragedy—agony of mind about relatives in famine areas and inability to help.

'Would you go back?' I asked my guide.

'Good God! Yes', he replied. 'But I should be shot on the frontier if I tried.'

It was dark when we reached the hotel. 'Will you join me at tea?' I asked. My guide drew himself up and bowed low. 'With great pleasure I would sit with you', he said, 'but I require no refreshment.' Which being interpreted meant, 'I cannot receive hospitality which it is not in my power to return.' Again he bowed low and was lost in the dusk of the crowded street.

MARGARET WRONG.

Echoes of the Miners' Strike in Nova Scotia

THE coal miners of Nova Scotia constitute the largest compact industrial community in Canada. The greater part of the twelve thousand miners of Nova Scotia live in a group of villages surrounding Glace Bay, Cape Breton. They have certain characteristics that distinguish them from the miners of Western Canada, and indeed from the industrial workers in any other district.

The majority of these are of Highland Scots origin. The forefathers of many were driven from their homes by the enclosure of the lands by the Scots landlords. As mining developed in Nova Scotia, the sons of the Scottish-Canadian farmers were drawn from the none too fertile farms of Cape Breton and their numbers reinforced by direct importations from the industrial districts of Scotland.

They are not foreigners and they are not transients. Born in Cape Breton, they think of Cape Breton as the home of their children. They have old-fashioned families of eight to twelve. The great majority are under the influence of the Church—either the Roman Catholic or the Presbyterian. Irrespective of religious affiliations they are all keen on education. Withal, they are thorough-going radicals—organized industrially—one hundred per cent. strong—United Mine Workers of America. They have applied for affiliation with the Red Trade Union International in Moscow.

Opposed to the miners' organization is the British Empire Steel Corporation—a huge trust with offices in Montreal—that controls the greater part of the industry of Nova Scotia and is believed by the miners and others practically to dominate the local legislature. In vain have the miners appealed to Halifax to obtain redress for some of their grievances. The statue of Joseph Howe stands in front of the legislative buildings, but the spirit of Howe is not in the legislative halls or in the administrative offices.

A great deal of indignation was worked up over the 'strike on the job' last Easter. Look at the situation from the miners' standpoint. The agreement had terminated. The Industrial Disputes Act stipulates that while a dispute is before the Board there shall be no change in wages. The operators, however, reduced wages on the technical ground that since there was no agreement there could be no dispute over the conditions of the agreement!

The men failing to secure redress through the courts took this ground: 'Very well, since the Company in violation of the spirit of the Industrial Disputes Act declares there is no agreement, and has reduced our wages, we will reduce our output.' In the debate in the House even Mr. Meighen recognized that the men had the better end of the argument. A fair day's work for a fair day's pay—conceded!

But what about a fair day's pay for a fair day's work?

About Easter, the mayors of the mining towns urged the Federal Government to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate the coal mining industry of Nova Scotia. Surely not an unreasonable request! But it was refused. Later, however, when the men were on strike, the Federal Government, at the request of a Judge and in spite of the protest of the mayors, hurried troops into the Glace Bay district. The Premier says that under the B.N.A. Act he had no option. That is a matter for constitutional lawyers to decide. The miners ask, however, why the request made by the mayors for a Royal Commission should be refused, while the Company's request (preferred through a Justice) for a military force should be granted?

It is true that the Government, on the motion of the Labour members of the House, reconstituted the Industrial Disputes Act. As in so many Boards, the Government-named Chairman was in favour of the Company's position, and the decision did not give the men the relief they wanted. So, other means exhausted, they called the strike of last summer.

The press was given very scant details of this rather remarkable strike. Now that it is over and a new agreement signed, the men, though they call the present position simply a truce, are fairly well satisfied with their gains. In spite of wage reductions all over the continent, these miners, during the past six months, have pushed up the basic rate from \$2.44 to \$2.84 before the strike, and then to \$3.25. Wages in all departments have made a corresponding advance. Real wages are higher than ever before in the Nova Scotia coal fields. Further, the miners came through the struggle with their organization intact—no small consideration! It remains to be seen what action will be taken by the American officials of the United Mine Workers with regard to the radical policies of those at present in control of the local U.M.A. offices in Cape Breton.

The recent strike was a wonderful exhibition, not only of unified power but of self-control. The returned-soldier miners undertook to preserve order. They drilled pickets. 'No Scabs, and no Booze' was the order. Every vehicle entering the district was stopped and searched. The cars of business and professional men and officials were all investigated and then allowed to proceed in peace. The most daring performance was the holding up of the troop train. A flat-car piled high with sand-bags and mounted with a machine gun was pushed ahead as the train entered the mining district. Hundreds of miners, with their wives and children, massed themselves between the tracks. The train stopped. The pickets pushed past the soldiers who stood on the platform bayonets in hand, and proceeded to search the train for 'scabs' and 'booze'. No shot was fired.

No violence occurred. No 'scabs' or 'booze' being discovered, the train was allowed to proceed.

When the thousand soldiers barricaded themselves and the Company's property at Dominion No. 2 Mine, some fifteen hundred returned-soldier miners lined up and went through a series of military manoeuvres to demonstrate that they had not forgotten their army training. But there was no clash. On the way in the troop train hit an automobile and killed two men. On the way out it smothered a car load of horses. These were the only casualties.

The bills remain to be paid. There is also left a bitter resentment on the part of Nova Scotians that outside soldiers should have been sent to force them into submission.

Neither the Coal Company officials nor the miners will soon forget how completely the latter controlled the situation. The Company had to send in requests for supplies of coal that were necessary to keep certain machinery in operation. On one or two occasions the men showed a certain grim humour in sending word to the officials that their committee was very busy, but that 'if the officials could call to-morrow their requests would then be considered'. The arbitrariness of industrial autocracy is more responsible for industrial unrest than many outsiders imagine: here it was two-edged.

Now that the strike is over McLachlan, the Miners' Secretary, is devoting considerable attention to the establishment of a Labour College. Educational Clubs have already been organized and a committee formed to seek representation in the proposed Federated Maritime University. But that is another story.

Meanwhile, the miners have, so far, been baffled in their attempts to secure representation in the Federal House. But they are Scots and not to be beaten.

J. S. WOODSWORTH.

Correspondence

THE CANADIAN FORUM had its origin in a desire to secure a freer and more informed discussion of public questions. Discussion is invited on editorials or articles appearing in the magazine or on any other matters of political or artistic interest. Conciseness, point, and good nature must be asked of correspondents, who should confine themselves to 800 words. The Editors are not responsible for matter printed in this column.

A Point of Patriotism

To the Editor, THE CANADIAN FORUM.

Sir:

The other evening, while waiting in a garage, I fell into conversation with a man who was similarly unoccupied. We fell to discussing the makes and prices of cars. He said he could never understand why such a high tariff on automobiles was