

COAL STRIKE PACT HANGS IN BALANCE

Deliveries Restored, but 'Any Spark' May Blow Up Agreement

BOTH SIDES WARY

(Pictures on Page 4.)

Settlement of Toronto's four-day coal strike was reached yesterday afternoon at Queen's Park on terms which, it was rumored, "any spark might blow up." Terms of the agreement signed by union and dealers' representatives were not officially disclosed.

While "everything on wheels" was pressed into service for the relief of hard-pressed consumers last night, Hon. Norman Hipel, Labor Minister, told the Legislature that settlement was reached on a basis "on which all parties seemed to be happy."

It was learned last night from an authoritative source at Queen's Park that the agreement which ended the strike was virtually the same as that which had been approved by the strikers on the previous day. This agreement had been subsequently turned down at a dealers' meeting. It is understood that wages remain the same as now. A grievance committee will be established in each coal yard, which is interpreted at Queen's Park as meaning the warring parties have thus compromised on the controversial issue of a closed shop for drivers.

From other sources it was learned that both parties were wary of making a statement for fear of re-introducing frictions which might imperil the new agreement.

Settlement of the paralyzing coal-delivery strike came just after it had threatened to spread out and embrace taxi-drivers, milk and bread deliverers, and other truckers. At noon the strikers asked the Teamsters' Joint Council No. 52 to order its members to hold sympathy strikes. The request would have been considered at a regular meeting of the Teamsters at 6 p.m. but was withdrawn when the coal strike ended.

Signing of the peace agreement took place in the office of Mr. Hipel. Separate meetings of the strikers and dealers had been held earlier in the day. Final terms of settlement were approved by representatives of the union, the Fuel Protection Association, the Fuel Dock Association and the Retail Fuel Dealers' Association.

In his announcement to the Legislature, Mr. Hipel said negotiations had been carried on night and day, since Monday morning, in which conciliation officers of the department had joined. Later, from department officials, it was learned that the Minister himself had not averaged three hours' sleep during the past two nights.

At the same time, he revealed that during the past five days "five strikes have been settled largely through the efforts of the conciliation officers of the Department of Labor."

Leopold Macaulay asked the Minister if unrest because of economic conditions was a factor in the strikes and strike threats.

"In relation to the coal strike," said Mr. Hipel, "it is a very complicated affair and it would take an hour at least to go over it. I would say the cause lies largely in the changes of doing business in the last ten years."

Mr. Hipel, in describing the operations of his department, said they did not try to push their officers into a strike situation. "But," he added, "it is becoming known that the department is there to help both sides and in many cases, in which trouble is brewing, employers and employees telephone in and call our officers to come down and sit in with them."

Up to the last hour, calls continued to deluge Mayor Day's office from homeowners in desperate need of coal. Welfare Commissioner Laver reported that as many as 2,400 Toronto relief families were without fuel. He called the situation "very serious."

Several companies had started to deliver coal under police protection. A special force of fifty-seven men was formed for this purpose under Inspector Reginald Lundy, and was comprised of nineteen mounted constables, two mounted patrol-sergeants, one mounted sergeant, five foot patrol-sergeants and thirty other constables, including motorcyclists. No attempts were made to interfere with deliveries.

"It is impossible to ignore the pitiful pleas that have reached me," said Mayor Day, before the strike was settled. "It is imperative that deliveries be resumed immediately, and the police have been instructed to provide whatever protection may be required."

On receiving news of the settlement, Commissioner Laver said his department would impress upon coal contractors "the urgent need" of supplying the city's fuelless relief families as soon as possible. Mayor Day suspended the city by-law prohibiting night deliveries of coal for two nights until 10 p.m.

A joint statement by Labor Minister Hipel, union officials and dealers, was issued after the Queen's Park conference. It follows: "A settlement satisfactory to all concerned has been arrived at, and the workers will return to work immediately. Deliveries will commence at once."

In dealing with accumulated orders, coal firms announced they would take care of emergency cases first.

"We will endeavor first to take care of orders from people whom doctors have certified to be in due need of coal because of sickness," said Donald M. Springer, president and general manager of Toronto Fuels Limited. "After that we will take them in the order in which they were received."

Other large dealers expressed belief it would take them until Sunday at the soonest to catch up in their deliveries. Some of the smaller dealers, however, experienced no accumulation of orders during the strike because of the many home-owners who came to their yards and took fuel away in 100-pound bags.

The strike's settlement saved more than 500 employees of Hunts, Limited, confectioners, from being thrown out of work today. According to L. K. Hegert, assistant general manager, the candy plant uses about two tons of coal daily and would have been without fuel by today.

One hundred piano workers who were temporarily forced out of employment at Mason and Risch, Limited, will go back on the job early this morning, it was announced last night by A. J. Mason, president.

End of the strike came none too soon for Toronto dairies. "The dairies were down to the last chunks in their coal bins," said Dr. Gordon Jackson, Medical Officer of Health, "and if the city had had to go without milk it would have been a grave situation."