

MUNITIONS BOARD ASKS FIRMS TO AVOID A STRIKE

**Chairman Flavelle Sends Letter
to Toronto and Hamilton
Manufacturers.**

EMPLOYERS ASSERT NO STRIKE PROBABLE

Toronto and Hamilton munition manufacturers are now asked by the Imperial Munitions Board to accept the terms as to wages and working conditions which the investigation commission recently recommended.

In a circular letter sent out to the munition makers, the board states that the labor leaders have intimated that they will not be responsible for what may happen in Toronto and Hamilton after Monday, June 5, if the terms of the award are not accepted by the employers. The Imperial Munitions Board and the Minister of Militia take the attitude that the terms set out by the commission are fair.

The award is of course, not binding on the employers, and no power of compulsion can be exercised on them. The aim of the Ottawa authorities is to prevent strikes and a possible delay in the production of munitions.

Don't Expect Trouble.

Local munition men do not anticipate strikes. "I don't expect to see any trouble," said Manager Hill, of the Toronto Plate Glass Company. "We want to keep our men from wandering away, and we are paying them far more than the award of the commission calls for. We were paying our tool-makers 45 cents an hour when the commission recommended that the minimum wage be 42½ cents. Then we raised them to 50 cents an hour, so we'd be sure to hold them. As for the hours of labor; we are working the men 10 hours, but that is covered by our contract, and we have no trouble on that score."

The main point of difference between the men and the masters is not a matter of wages, but rather of hours. The men want a nine-hour day. The manufacturers already work a ten-hour day and most of them keep their plants working ten hours a day on their other branches of industry, munition making being a later development. They do not like to switch to the shorter day.

"The outcome of this will be," said one munition maker, "that the employers will settle with the men the points in dispute by paying them overtime or making some other adjustment. Some firms now pay their men time and a half for the tenth hour they work every day."

The Board's Letter.

The letter sent out by Chairman J. W. Flavelle of the Munitions Board is as follows:

"The board has been advised by the Minister of Labor that he has received a communication from the representatives of the machinists and tool-makers in Hamilton, that they will require the manufacturers of munitions to put into force the recommendations contained in the report of the commissioners—Judge Snider, William Inglis, and J. A. McLellan—or that failing to do so, the labor leaders will be unable to assume responsibility for what would occur after Monday, the 5th inst., which presumably is to be interpreted that failing to meet their demands, a strike would follow. I learn that a similar communication has since been received by the Minister from Toronto.

"The board is concerned in any situation which may adversely affect the sustained delivery of munitions. The Imperial authorities have entrusted the Canadian manufacturers with an important percentage of their requirements in some sizes of shells, and we are assured they will share in our alarm as to the effect upon delivery if strikes were to occur in Hamilton and Toronto, with the almost inevitable tendency to spread to other centres. I am directed, therefore, by the board, to indicate to you, and in similar terms to other manufacturers of munitions in Hamilton and Toronto, that they hope you will be able either to accept the findings of the commission, or to carry on negotiations with the work people, that an agreement may be reached whereby a strike may be avoided.

"In the meantime, we understand, the Minister of Labor, recognizing the gravity of the situation, has sent officers of the department to Toronto and Hamilton to request the leaders of labor that no action be taken at as early a date as June 5th, as the time is too short to permit the necessary negotiations to take place for the purpose of arriving at a satisfactory conclusion.

"We will appreciate hearing from you what action is being taken by the manufacturers in Hamilton."