

# LABOR MINISTER SCORED BY TRADES UNION CONGRESS

## If Evidence From Thetford is True Says Winnipeg Member, Department is Farce

Toronto, Sept. 27.—The motion of Delegate Rousseau, of Thetford Mines, which aroused a prolonged debate at yesterday's session of the Trades and Labor Congress and spurred the Minister of Labor, Hon. Mr. Crothers, to a defense of his department's action in the strike of asbestos miners at Thetford, Quebec, a few weeks ago, declared that the reason a board of conciliation was not granted on the miners' request to arbitrate between the parties at Thetford mines was the bad faith of the Minister of Labor, and also that the mine owners had acted in bad faith by ignoring an agreement in which they had bound themselves not to discriminate against the men who had been on strike, and that Mgr. Roy, coadjutor to Cardinal Begin, had instructed Rev. J. E. T. Proulx to fight the movement to establish an international union at Thetford mines, with the result that a Catholic union was formed.

### Case of the Miners.

The case of the miners was set forth by Messrs. G. Francq, of Montreal; Richard A. Rigg, M.P., Winnipeg, and other speakers. They said that in June last the miners had demanded an increase of wages, a check-off system, the recognition of their union. They asserted that the men were informed that the asbestos mines came within the scope of the Industrial Disputes' Act and that they would be guilty of a criminal offense if they struck without applying for appointment of a conciliation board. The miners made application and were told that a board could not be appointed because the companies refused to agree on a joint representative. At final settlement, Mr. Rigg said, the companies actually were represented by one man and the miners by a committee. The miners complained that 45 aliens from the internment camp at Spirit Lake were brought to the mines to work, and, some thought, to intimidate those who were asking for higher wages. "If the evidence is true," said Mr. Rigg, "a very serious indictment has been brought against the Labor Department. If the evidence is true it simply means that the Industrial Disputes' Act is a colossal farce, and, at the whim of any minister, can be used to brow-beat labor and settle disputes in the interests of the employers."

### Want Election Holidays.

The Trades and Labor Congress at yesterday morning's proceedings of the convention honored the memory of the late Keir Hardie by a standing vote, yesterday being the anniversary of his death. James Simpson and other delegates spoke in tribute to the great British labor leader.

The Congress went on record as favoring election days being established as statutory holidays, and failing that, having the voting hours extended until 8 p.m.

There was lengthy discussion over pensions for reservists of the allied armies. The resolution finally carried, favoring putting all on an equality if the French, Russian, Italian and Belgian governments fail to raise the pension to the Canadian standard, the Dominion Government to implement the pensions to that standard.

The question of land grants to returned soldiers and taxation of unoccupied lands were subjects which precipitated warm discussion.

Secretary-Treasurer Draper, of Ottawa, in his annual report, showed that the total receipts for the year were \$13,646 and expenditures \$10,888, leaving a balance of \$2,757 above the \$10,000 reserve fund. There was a material falling off in receipts last year, owing to the war.