

COBALT MINERS MAY GO ON STRIKE

Action Deferred a Week to Let Kirkland Lake Miners Get Reply

(From the Northern Correspondent
of The Globe.)

Cobalt, June 1.—The meeting of members of the Cobalt branch of the International Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers' Union held to-day deferred action until next Sunday. The men were to have been asked to vote on the question of presenting certain demands to the mine operators of Cobalt. The postponement of any action for a week was for the purpose of letting the miners of Kirkland Lake receive a reply to their demands. So far, as stated in Friday's Globe, the only place where a demand has actually been made is at Kirkland Lake.

In discussing the situation with the District Secretary of the union to-day, The Globe was informed that, while the mine operators of Kirkland had been given ten days in which to make reply, it was quite probable the demand to the other camps would ask for a quicker reply. "In view of the rapidity of developments in the labor situation in other industrial centres of **Canada,**" said the Secretary, "it is quite likely things in Cobalt, Kirkland Lake and Porcupine would be brought to a head with the least possible delay."

General Demand.

He also pointed out that a strike vote was taken in 1917, which vote still holds good, and that the probable course on Sunday will be to take an open vote of those present for the re-endorsement of the 1917 vote. In all camps the demand will be the same, that is, a forty-four-hour week, minimum underground wage of \$4.50 daily, and recognition of the union.

Mine managers throughout the district are more or less reticent, but seem to be largely of the opinion that present wages and hours are about the full limit of which the mines can stand, and there appears to be every indication that the great majority of the mines would curtail operations temporarily should there

be an actual demand presented by the union.

Receiving High Wages.

As matters now stand the average mine worker is receiving high pay, even higher than some of the low-grade gold mines can pay and realize a profit. The position of the union is not strong. For instance, should a general strike be called at the mines there is no other big industry to absorb the labor, with the probable result that hardship would soon confront not a few of the strikers. Perhaps the greatest pity in such a situation is the fact that the **foreigners** who worked at high wages throughout the war have accumulated a large cash reserve on which they may be able to live without hardship, whereas the returned men or the British-born have not been able to hoard up a reserve fund, with the result that the more loyal the subject the greater might be found the hardship.

Less Than 50 Per Cent. Organized.

As matters now stand less than fifty per cent. of the men are organized. During the last few days a good many have joined the union. There is some evidence that would indicate this to be a step to obtaining union allowances during the period of the strike, and in some instances at least may be a precautionary step rather than sympathy toward the organization.

To your correspondent the Secretary of the union declared that, while labor in other parts of the country was making a stand for recognition, and while he was not prepared to predict what other men were going to do yet, action would be taken in the mining districts, and if the demands are refused, then it will be necessary for the union to exercise the powers contained in the only other weapon at its command.