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Danny "Dancer" MacDonald: But what you got at the company store was quality and quantity. A private merchant might cut a few ounces off, but there in the company store it was out own flesh and blood • daughters and sons of miners. If there were any breaks you got it. And everything they had was first class. Clothes, furniture, grub was the best of everything. But we're better to have it out of our way, be? cause it created a way of life that wasn't good. You know, there were men that died and still were owing to that store. Archie MacIntyre: You could go in and buy until • until it reached a stage regard? less the father was sick, when you went to the company store they had what you call you've drawn up your lot, and if you didn't have enough in to cover for that pound of butter you didn't get it. And there were other disadvantages. They had what was called the Provincial Workers Association, organized in Springhill in 1882, It was a no-strike union. So about 1907 the U.M.W. entered Cape Breton and they started to organize. The P,W,A, was recognized by the company and the government. They took a vote, and the U.M.W, carried the majority. The P.W.A, said No • and the result was happened there was a strike. It became a strike between two unions instead of for rights and wages. And there in our early life we saw that instead of being an ad? vantage and a God-send to the people, the company houses and the company stores were instruments the company could use to brow-beat the miners into the union of the company's choice. Then in 1925 the men were threatened with a 37 1/2% reduction in wage. When the strike came on the company cut them off. There were donations coming in from U,M,W. and others. Local bakers would donate some bread. They could not sell it anyway. The way the rations worked, each area like Caledonia, New Aber? deen, Glace Bay • they had stations set up and you'd be notified a certain day in the week to go down. And you went down with an ordinary potato bag. And you'd prob? ably get a little bit of stew meat, and some potatoes.... Archie MacIntyre Gordon MacGregor Billy Pittman Billy Pittman: Dry codfish, don't forget that. And molasses out of the punchion. Thomas Daye: It was often referred to as carrying the bag. Archie MacIntyre: The violence broke out at Waterford. A fellow named Davis was shot. For years we had a holiday, Davis Day, June 11th. He was shot when rioting started after pickets tried to stop officials from running the plant. And that led to the end of the company stores. Danny "Dancer" MacDonald: They were burnt to the ground, every one of them, I helped to do it, I'll tell you how it came about. Desperation, mostly. It wasn't vandalistic, understand, as desperation. As the strike got more desperate we started to withdraw our maintenance men. It's always the policy of mine workers to leave our maintenance men on, to see the mines are not flooded. Well our electricity for this town. Dominion, was supplied by the Dominion Coal Company's plants here. The alternate one was at Karney Lake in New Waterford. Well, everything was in dark? ness. The hospitals had their own generators. And the company was determined to open that plant at Karney Lake. They called in their officials to do it. And they took as protection for those men the coal company watchmen. Men that had no experi? ence as horsemen, less



experience with a shooting iron. They armed them and they put them on the horses that we took out of the pit. Men were angry. You can under? stand the mind of a man when he's looking at some children in front of him crying for some grub that he's not able to give them. We got word that five strikers were CAPE BRETON'S MAGAZINE/4