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all the town councils and this statement effectively articulated the common concern of the coal towns: ... conditions in the coal mining industry have been such as to create wide-spread poverty among the miners as well as among the merchants and other citizens dependent upon the miners ... rendering almost impossible the performance of normal municipal functions through lack of income, and bringing to the verge of starvation many of our citizens, and causing to leave the town many of our most valued citizens. Each of the coal towns depended on the coal industry "for its very existence as an organized social unit"; unless there was a settlement of the industrial conflict, the resolution appealed, "disaster will inevitably ensue." Three times during the 1920s the Canadian armed forces arrived in the coal towns to do strike duty, but the British Empire Steel Corporation's appeals for military aid received no support from the town councils and only deepened divisions between corporation and community. On the first day of the 1922 strike, H. J. McCann, general manager of Dominion Coal, twice appealed to Mayor Morrison to call out troops under the provisions of the Militia Act. Morrison issued public statements denouncing the use of troops as "unfortunate and ill-advised, and totally unnecessary." The town council endorsed his actions, protested the use of troops, and repudiated the expenses. In New Waterford Mayor Ling rejected a similar request and the council stated "they did not consider there was any need of sending soldiers to the place." The refusal of the towns to endorse military action forced the company to turn to a county court judge for the necessary requisition. To ensure order in the coal towns during the strikes, however, the town councils on several occasions appointed large numbers of special police; these forces were drawn largely from the ranks of the veterans' association and the miners' union. In Glace Bay 250 special police were named in 1922 and 120 police in 1923, and similar forces were formed in New Waterford in 1922 and 1926. Under the authority of the town police committees, the special police patrolled the towns and enforced temperance and orderly behaviour as never before. One former member of the special police in Glace Bay recalled: "All roads leading in and out of town were manned by this force day and night, and all cars entering town were searched for liquor. This, I am sure, prevented bloodshed in our town during the strikes of the 1920s." For the coal towns, the arrival of troops was not only an affront to civic pride but also an assault on the civic purse. Under the Militia Act, the costs of transporting and maintaining the troops were charged to the municipality. In Glace Bay bills from the Militia Department were ignored and never admitted into the town's financial records. Upon the receipt of one such bill, a rhyming reply to the Prime Minister appeared on the front page of the Maritime Labor Herald. "Send the Bill to Besco," written by local poet Dawn Fraser, gave voice to community feelings: "ONE OF THE FOREMOST MUSEUMS IN NOVA SCOTIA" k. 'S.tj' Visit an Underground Coal Mine The Miners' Museum Glace Bay, N. S. Bring your family to enjoy the once in a lifetime experience of touring an actual Coal Mine with a retired miner as your guide. After touring Museum and Mine, visit the well-stocked Gift



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