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The 1923 Strike in Steel and the Miners' Sympathy Strike Royal Canadian Dragons at Steel Plant. Sydney. 1923; Bernie GalloWay, Emmerson Campbell. The Order of Events: In June, 1923t steel- workers at Sydney went out on strike a- gainst the British Empire Steel Corpora? tion (BESCO). Within hours, Judge Finlay? son signed orders calling up federal troops to aid local civil power, "in an? ticipation of disorders that might arise." From Halifax, a provincial police force was sent to Sydney. The first detachment of federal troops arrived early on the morning of Saturday, June 30. The provin? cial police, with the troops to back them up, entered into direct engagement with strikers and bystanders, resulting the next day (July 1) in Bloody Sunday. With that, J. B. McLachlan brought out the Dis? trict 26 miners in a 100 per cent strike. Eventually, the miners closed not only- Cape Breton and mainland mines, but Dis? trict 18 in Alberta came out as well in support of the steelworkers • all demanding the recall of the troops and provincial police. J. B. McLachlan and Dan Living? stone were arrested, originally for pub? lishing what the Sydney Post called "a false picture" of the events of Bloody Sunday; McLachlan was eventually tried for seditious libel and sentenced to two years in Dorchester Penitentiary (of which about 4 months were served). John L. Lewis, the leader of the United Mine Workers Interna? tional, demanded the return of the miners to work; and when they refused he revoked the District 26 charter, removed the radi? cal executive, put in his own slate of of? ficers, and sent the miners back to work. Without support, the steelworkers' strike was doomed • but they did hold on awhile. Finally, faced with the combination of not being able to gather in groups larger than three (effectively destroying picketing), starvation, jail sentences, seeing the plant begin to operate again, and the an? nouncement that strikers vacate the cor? poration's housing • they resolved to go back to work. What follows is a story not only of the e- vents of 1923 as told by people who were there (Doane Curtis, Dan MacKay, Mr. and Mrs. Bernie Galloway, and Emmerson Camp? bell); it is also the story of how those events were reported by the press of the time. Doane Curtis and Dan MacKay are not living; they were taped some time ago by the College of Cape Breton Archives (The Beaton Institute). The Galloways and Em? merson Campbell were interviewed recently. The two principle newspapers used here are the Sydney Post and the- Maritime Labour Herald. Neither newspaper can be said to give us a balanced, completely accurate account. They do clearly offer us the bias and tone of the time. Dan MacKay; I think we should say a word about why we had to organize. The reason we organized was the intolerable condi? tions that we were labouring under on that plant at that time. The hours were 11 hours by day, 13 hours by night, 7 days a week, no holidays, no vacations. In fact it was a common saying then that the steelworker going home, particularly in CAPE BRETON'S MAGAZINE, NUMBER TWENTY-TWO WRECK COVE, CAPE BRETON, NOVA SCOTIA SECOND CLASS MAIL • REGISTRATION NUMBER 3014