

## **ASBESTOS STRIKE NOW FULLY ENDED**

All who have followed the progress of the long and bitter strike of workers in the asbestos-mining districts of the province will doubtless share the satisfaction over the complete end of the strike shown by spokesmen for the company and the union concerned in the final back-to-work agreement, and by the rejoicing strikers themselves.

It is a matter of regret that the key group of strikers, those employed by the Canadian Johns-Manville Company at Asbestos, Que., were unable to reach such an agreement when the majority of strikers in the area did so at the end of last week. However, after a further week's idleness, the holdout group was able to reach an understanding agreeable to it and will follow the lead of workers at Thetford Mines by returning to work over the week-end.

The delay in winding up the strike completely was all the more regrettable in that, as far as can be judged from announced details of the Asbestos agreement, it is the same or closely similar to that which ended the walkout at Thetford Mines. In both cases, the agreements do not provide definite or final settlement of the issues which have kept the disputing parties grimly deadlocked for four and a half months. But they do provide for the strikers to resume and maintain work pending further negotiation and, if this proves fruitless, submission of outstanding issues to an arbitration board.

At both Asbestos and Thetford Mines, the union locals have accepted commitments by the employing firms to a provisional increase of 10 cents an hour in wages and re-employment of strikers, with discretionary powers reserved to the companies in regard to re-hiring of men convicted in the courts of criminal charges arising from the walkout. Matters apparently still in dispute, and likely to require submission to the arbitration board, include the question of union security through the Rand formula and the demand for consultation with the union over promotions, lay-offs and dismissals.

It is to be hoped that the prospect of conclusive and stable settlement which has now materialized, as a result of the men's sensible decision to revert to the legal status quo existing prior to the strike, will not be unduly long in coming to pass. It may also be hoped that now production is to be resumed without reprisals on either side, the rancor and hostility engendered by the prolonged walk-out will rapidly subside to enable both sides to iron out their remaining differences on a basis of rational discussion.

Source: Editorial, "Asbestos Strike Now Fully Ended", *The Montreal Gazette*, July 2, 1949, p.8. Transcribed by Mark Grinberg. Revised by Claude Bélanger.