

Anthracite Miners to Disregard Award

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to set the whole anthracite region ablaze.

"You propose to disregard President Wilson's award and call on the miners of the anthracite region to walk out?" I asked the men in body in advance.

"We do," was the emphatic response. They one miner delegate declared headily. "I'd rather go to prison for five years than lay down on this fight."

I was invited to attend the secret meeting of the strikers. It was held in a log room in Pittston. About fifty men were present from all parts of the First district. There are three districts in the anthracite region—No. 1, John T. Dempsey, president, with headquarters in Scranton; No. 7, Thomas Kennedy, president, headquarters at Hazleton; and No. 9, Chris Golden, president, headquarters at Shamokin.

The fifty delegates meant business and indulged in no threats. They were of all the nationalities usually found in a mining region—American, Welsh, Poles, Slavs and Italians.

It was a regular meeting and had not been staged for my benefit. For my visit to Pittston was not known in advance.

The presiding officer ruled the meeting and was on the job every instant. He indignantly protested that the men were neither Bolsheviks nor of the I. W. W. There was some denunciation of John T. Dempsey, the United Mine Workers' president, as incompetent, and repeated declarations that they did not recognize his leader.

Fight Contract System
As for the Pennsylvania Coal Co., its shortcomings from the miners' standpoint were picturesquely set forth.

These men did not mince words. They struck from the shoulder and spoke from the heart. There was some denunciation of John T. Dempsey, the United Mine Workers' president, as incompetent, and repeated declarations that they did not recognize his leader.

To me, as a stranger and a newspaper correspondent, the chairman appointed one of the delegates, former vice president of the district union, to state their case. Concretely, this is the grievance of 8000 men who are going today to try to throw the anthracite coal region into the throes of a general strike.

"Primarily we are on strike against discrimination and the individual contract system. A miner is compelled to mine coal for the outside markets at the rate of from \$1.07 to \$1.10 per ton, and the coal sells to the ultimate consumer for from \$9.75 to \$14.50 a ton.

"The individual contractor and the system he represents is the one thing we are fighting. He is not necessarily a miner. One of them runs a fruit stand. Usually he is an Italian; a sort of peddler. He cannot become a member of any miners' organization. He employs from five to fifty or seventy men. He does not work himself, but gathers a 'rake off' from the pay check of every man he employs.

"He hires and fires men at will. He is favored by the coal company because it can use him and through him the men he employs.

"These individual contractors do want the company every year of thousands of dollars by padded payrolls. We have affidavits of men and boys who were never near a mine, but who were paid to answer to a name and get a pay envelope at the paymaster's window."

In this connection I am told that Sam Lucchino, an Italian detective, formerly of the United States secret service, was murdered by imported gunmen from Trenton in Pittston on July 21. He had been engaged in obtaining affidavits of padded payrolls of some

of these individual contractors. Two men, Pietro Enrico and Tony Cotteraro, of Trenton, on the confession of a man named Bombolo, are in jail under indictment in Wilkes-Barre awaiting trial for this murder.

Opportunity Denied to Americans
"We are fighting this system, which gives to these padrones opportunities denied to Americans and other men who have worked for from five to forty years in the mines. We demand that the entire system be wiped out."

"Under the working conditions of the Pennsylvania Coal Co. and other corporations, we, as miners, get no pay whatever for all coal we mine below pea-coal size. It is in all thousands of tons yearly sold by the corporations, but we never get a penny for it. This includes buckwheat No. 1 and No. 2, rice and birdseye sizes. It is mined but not paid for."

"We are compelled to mine 2700 pounds of coal for each 2000 pounds that we get paid for. This excess of coal is the debris about the coal. We demand a change in the existing system that will give us a living wage."

This is the miners' complaint. It was unanimously indorsed by the men who heard it. The case doubtless may be exaggerated in certain statements and figures, but it is a striking presentation, even allowing for that element of weakness.

There is one statement, however, in the above that will challenge the attention of the ultimate consumer of coal. It is the allegation of these miners that they protest against being compelled to mine coal for \$1.10 a ton which sells to the consumer for \$9.75 to \$14.50 a ton. In Scranton, Pittston and elsewhere consumers have informed me that they pay \$9.75 a ton for coal mined within a mile of their homes. For this the man who performs the manual labor necessary to get it out says he receives only \$1.10.

Miners' Pay Much Reduced
I am giving the figures as they were given me by the miners. In Philadelphia nearly \$9 a ton is added to the Scranton price. I had the opportunity to examine several of the due bills of these miners—the printed slips showing their time pay and the deductions. One miner working for one of these individual contractors received for ten days' work \$76.28. Of this amount he turned back \$22 as the contractor's share or levy. His supplies, furnished by the contractor, amounted to \$4.99 and his net earnings for the ten days amounted to \$48.28.

The men claim that the individual contractor purchases powder for \$1.50 a keg from the coal company and resells it to the miner for \$2.10, making a profit of sixty cents on every keg. And the mining corporation not only winks at this extortion, but, the men say, encourages it.

I find that there is a subdued pessimism among the United Mine Workers' officials over the outcome of the perplexing questions that have arisen as a result of this outlaw strike in the first district. There is an espe-

cially bitter feeling manifested against the Department of Justice officials. After agreeing to stand by the coal commission's award and with the threat of the Lever act held over the heads of United Mine Workers in case of a strike, the Department of Justice, they say, has permitted the insurgent miners around Pittston to conduct a strike for nearly eight weeks without once interfering to prevent it or take legal action under the Lever act against its promoters. As for the strikers of the Pennsylvania Coal Co., they apparently have no fear of arrest under the federal law. They propose, as I have stated above, to defy the President and the Department of Justice by endeavoring to call a general strike.

One thing appears certain as a result of interviews and talks with insurgent miners and United Mine Workers: if the "outlaw" or insurgent miners now on strike can succeed in calling out any considerable number of miners in the region, there is a good prospect of a general strike. Otherwise their efforts will fail.

The reason for this is that every coal miner in the region, there is a good "scab," so called; a man who refuses to go out on strike with his fellows. It has always been the most powerful element in the region, and it is a good prospect of a general strike. Otherwise their efforts will fail.

The plans of the United Mine Workers' officials is, first, to try to obtain a reopening of the case, or a review of the award, and second, in the meantime, to hold their men in line by pointing to the fact that the union has been pledged to stand by the award of the coal commission, no matter what it might be.

Even Neal Ferry, the miners' representative on the Anthracite Coal Commission, who submitted a minority report recommending a 27 per cent advance in wages, has pledged President Wilson in his report that the United Mine Workers will stand by the award, no matter how distasteful it may be to them.

The operators are sitting tight and saying nothing. They have passed the matter up to the President and he has accepted the award of the majority of the commission. They now expect him to back up his decision. This, they take it, means revoking the penalties prescribed in the Lever law.

Captain William A. May, president of the Pennsylvania Coal Co., had de- manded that all newspaper men, Word, however, came from his office today that there was nothing to be said on the strike of his company's men on the prospect of a general walkout in the region.

Says Wilson's Letter Settles It
"There is nothing to it," was the word from his secretary this afternoon. "Read President Wilson's letter. That settles it."

W. Jett Lauck was the consulting economist for the United Mine Workers when they presented their demand for an increase to the coal commission. He was prepared to prove that the anthracite coal operators were making huge profits in their business. The commission, however, declined to consider his evidence.

Mr. Lauck's figures on labor contracts were those given me by the Pittston miners. He estimates the labor cost of producing a ton of anthracite coal at \$2.71 for weighed average of all sizes of coal as against the claim of the miners of \$1.10. The most significant feature of a statement which he has issued is contained in the following:

"The price of anthracite coal to the consumer should be reduced as a result of the award of the anthracite coal commission. Let there be no mistake, no misrepresentation about that. When the case was submitted to arbitration with an agreement that the award should date from April 1, 1920, the anthracite operators advanced the price of coal at the mine \$1 per ton, effective April 1, to protect themselves against any wage increase the commission should make."

"The wage increase provided by the majority report of the commission increases the labor cost of producing a ton of coal barely fifty cents. This means that the \$1 advance made by the operators on April 1 has netted them fifty cents a ton over and above the amount which they are now required to pay the mine workers in back pay."

In other words, the operators have benefited by the award to a far greater extent than the miners, and the consumer, the general public, is the goat.

And yet there is talk of a still further advance in the price of anthracite coal in Philadelphia.

collieries of the Susquehanna Coal Co., most of them in District No. 9, are in idleness.

MEN QUIT HOURLY; COLLIERIES CLOSING

Pottsville, Pa., Sept. 1.—Miners at the collieries still at work are quitting hourly, declaring they did not know the strike was to be effective today. This fact gives strength to the statement of the insurgents that this region will be completely tied up tomorrow.

Officials of the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Co. do not admit the completeness of the strike, but say many of their collieries are working short handed. At these operations bosses are taking a hand as workmen, but are much handicapped by the constant absences of the strike ranks.

Some of the strikers will get any dues or benefits from the millions of dollars tied up in the treasury of the United Mine Workers, which does not officially recognize the strike, but nearly every miner has a substantial bank balance, and this puts the strike on a different footing from previous wage struggles in this vicinity.

PRESIDENT'S REPLY TO MINERS FINAL

By a Staff Correspondent
Washington, Sept. 1.—White House officials declined to comment today on strike developments in the anthracite region.

At the office of Samuel Gampers, president of the American Federation of Labor, it was said he would "probably have nothing to say" on the strike for several days.

Both government officials and labor chiefs are watching the situation closely, however, and it was intimated that arrests might be expected if agents of the Department of Justice find evidence of conspiracy to shut down the mines.

President Wilson is not expected to take any immediate action or communicate further with the miners or the

wage commission whose award they rejected. It was indicated today that he had said his last word in answer to the miners, and that if they refuse to accept the commission's report the government would have no alternative but to consider the strike an "outlaw" affair and treat it accordingly.

SCALE COMMITTEE OF MINERS MEETS

Hazleton, Pa., Sept. 1.—The scale committee of the miners, including Phil Murray, international vice president, today went into session here behind closed doors to map out a policy in connection with the acceptance of the award. The session probably will last all day, and is in preparation for tomorrow's joint meeting with the operators' scale committee at Scranton, called by Secretary of Labor Wilson to write the terms of the award into a two-year contract. Labor leaders said they were opposed to any suspension and are urging the men to continue work.

Thomas Kennedy, president of District 7, expressed the opinion that the award would be adopted under protest,

but that new demands probably would be made. The Wilkes-Barre tridistrict convention, held some time ago, he said, pledged itself to accept the award and the organization could not afford to go back on its word.

Mr. Kennedy said a source of dissatisfaction with the award was the upsetting of the differentials existing among the several classes of mine workers. He said the operators and miners joined in an agreement with the commission that whatever increases were granted should be uniform and that the difference in pay among the various classes of workers should not be disturbed. The award of the coal commission, Mr. Kennedy said, gave his outside company men, largely made up of unskilled labor, an increase of 25 per cent, while skilled men were awarded advances of only 17 to 20 per cent. The miners asked a uniform increase for all classes of labor of about 27 per cent.

At the same time, he took an optimistic view of the situation, and denied reports that a coal famine threatened Philadelphia. He claimed that many householders have more coal in their cellars now than ever before at this time of the year.

STRIKE'S EFFECT UNCERTAIN

Coal Men Unable to Predict How Philadelphia Will Fare
Charles Scull, secretary of the Philadelphia Coal Exchange, said this afternoon that it is impossible to predict at present what effect the walkout of 35,000 miners in the anthracite field will have on coal shipments to Philadelphia. "That remains to be seen," he said when asked if the failure of the miners to report for work would decrease the present supply of household coal in this city.

At the same time, he took an optimistic view of the situation, and denied reports that a coal famine threatened Philadelphia. He claimed that many householders have more coal in their cellars now than ever before at this time of the year.

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St. Louis Monday.
Hel-lo-o-o-o Pete:
In two more shakes of a lamb's tail I'd have been between the sheets—but I got taken with another large idea for Camel Cigarette ads that's so bright you can phone 'em to cut the current because you just had your lamp lit!
Tell you, it's a whale of a stunt! Everybody right quiet—and hats off! NOW—far as I know or ever heard, there never has been one of those zippy slogans under that big display name "Camel". I'VE GOT ONE—get me? Put both your ears close to the ground and get the rumble of a broadside like this:
Camel
Once it meant an animal—now a Cigarette!
Now, Pete! I'll testify that's a stoneless peach! Spread it like I've dented it in here—and you've uncorked an eyeful! Suppose you'll want to call me old Mr. Hammer because I hit the nail on the head!
And, bet real money that if this slogan stuff keeps me awake the rest of the night, I'll wire and offer it to R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. before you hit the deck! And, I'll be spending some of the proceeds for noon eats!
In the lang-wage of jigger jones of Joplin, "you tell 'em old yacht, you've got the sales spirit!"
Blowing out of St. Louis at 10.12 tomorrow with a bundle of business. Off for Ohio. Got something on me mind!
I'll get it off—Shorty
Ex-TRY! Ex-TRY!
Just got a wire, I sold 'em that slogan! Pete, eat on me! S.