

Scranton



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SCRANTON, PA., WEDNESDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 17, 1902.

TWELVE PAGES TWO CENTS.

MINERS' CASE HAS BEEN CONCLUDED

Testimony Closed with Examination of President Samuel Gompers of Federation of Labor.

IMPORTANT DECISION BY THE COMMISSION

Will Not Go Into the Question of Alleged Discrimination in Freight Rates Against Hard Coal or Existence of a Community of Interests Among the Operators, as It Is Outside the Scope of the Commission. Judge Gray Again Speaks About Child Labor—Statistics of the Hillside Coal and Iron Company—Operator Testifies as Miners' Witness.

After presenting testimony for twenty days, from 140 witnesses, the miners yesterday concluded their case in chief before the mine strike commission, and today the respondents will jointly enter upon their defense.

Sessions will be held here for the remainder of the week, and on Saturday the commission will adjourn over the holidays to meet again Monday, January 3, 1903, at Philadelphia, to hear the remaining of the respondents' case.

The rebuttal testimony of the miners will likely be heard in Scranton.

The respondents will open their case today by the presentation of a joint statement by the big companies, independents and non-union men. It will be read by Attorney Simon P. Wolverton, of counsel for the Philadelphia and Reading company. The Delaware and Hudson company will then proceed to lay its case before the commission.

Yesterday's session was one of the most interesting and important yet held. A particularly important feature was the flat unexpected refusal of the commission to go into an investigation of the internal questions of exorbitant freight rates on hard coal, and the profits or losses of anthracite mining, unless it developed that the operators will defend against the demand for increased compensation on the ground that it can not afford to pay the same.

Only three witnesses were on the stand, but each of them gave testimony of an unusually interesting and pertinent character.

A bit of a surprise was sprung at the morning session by the miners' side calling to the stand J. C. Haddock, of Wilkes-Barre, an independent operator, who has not been working in harmony with the big companies, and who was not at all reluctant to give testimony unfavorable to his fellow-operators.

Gompers on the Stand.

The whole of the afternoon session was taken up with the examination of Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, who told of the successful workings of trade agreements, and the policies and principles of trade unionism in general. He made an excellent witness, and, no doubt, made a strong impression on the commissioners. He was asked a great many questions by the commissioners, and when he concluded his testimony was thanked for his assistance by Chairman Gray.

The other witness was Rev. Peter Roberts, Ph.D., who was re-called to explain a chart he had made showing the fluctuations in hard coal production during the past ten years, for the purpose of supporting the contention of the miners' side that the year 1901 was so comparatively good as to be abnormal, and, therefore, not a proper period to serve as a criterion of miners' earnings.

At the opening of the morning session, Judge Gray referred to the testimony of the silk mill girls of the day before, and, in the name of the commission, called upon the community to take steps to remedy the sad condition of affairs unfolded by the stories of the little girls. He particularly recommended that legislation be passed forbidding children or females from working all night.

A summary of the statistics of the Hillside Coal and Iron company for the year 1901 were filed during the afternoon by Major Everett Warren. It showed that the average number of pounds of prepared and pea coal produced per miners' ton were 2,088; average earnings of company hands, men and boys \$35.52; average hours worked per day, 6.6-10. The summary is printed in full in another place.

The decision of the commission refusing to accept, at this time, testimony bearing on freight rates and alleged community of interests among the operators followed a speech by Henry D. Lloyd advocating the acceptance of the data he has prepared on this subject, and which he was engaged in presenting, the day before, when objections on the part of the companies moved the commission to ask Mr. Lloyd to defer the further reading of his data until later.

Mr. Lloyd's Speech.

Mr. Lloyd read his speech from manuscript, as follows:

Mr. Chairman, I desire to ask the committee to accept my data to put in evidence with regard to the community of interest eliminating freight rates, for this reason: the fact that such rates have been and are charged go to the very root of the question at issue here between the coal companies and their men.

We do not desire to submit this evidence for the purpose of asking the commission to take cognizance of it as a matter within your jurisdiction. We do not ask you to assume the functions delegated by congress to the Interstate Commerce Commission. The Interstate

Commerce Commission has already pronounced on the question and its findings are part of the evidence we wish to submit, but we ask the commission to receive this evidence because it shows that a state of affairs of great import to labor in this community has arisen and how:

The Antlerite Coal Companies of the wages which shall be paid and the conditions of employment which shall obtain, together with satisfactory methods for the adjustment of grievances which may arise from time to time to the end that strikes and lock-outs may be unnecessary.

Vast Fields of Inquiry.

The commission is not unmindful of the fact that the issues thus presented, like most issues presented for the determination of the human faculties, touch at various points vast fields of thought, much more than the boundaries of large sociological questions, undoubtedly, and for that very reason the commission have felt that it was very important that they should not be tempted into these fields, however attractive for exploration, but should confine themselves to the inquiry within a reasonable limit of investigation.

The award of which you speak, Mr. Lloyd, and as to which you expressed a wish that it may be one that will be productive of good results and permanent power over the working men and their families would be the dim and distant future if we attempted to explore thoroughly these fields which you, by your offer, open to us.

I do not mean that you propose to take much time in reading the evidence to which you refer, or to spend one hour in discussing it, or otherwise than make a complete investigation. We must endeavor at least not to arrive at half truths and we must invite the other side to go into that field with us and assist, as you would assist, in arriving at a reasonable solution of the question at issue.

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