

MINERS OPPOSE CHANGE IN LAW

Union Will Fight Any Attempt to Wipe Out Present Two-Year Rule

Scranton, Aug. 23.—Any attempt made to change the state law regulating the granting of miners' certificates in such a way that the present two-year rule will be wiped out is to be stubbornly opposed by the Mine Workers' Union, according to statements recently credited to leaders in the three anthracite districts. There has been some talk of having the law amended so that a miner would not have to have two years' experience before becoming eligible for a certificate, it being claimed such a course offered a solution for the scarcity of miners and the tonnage question, but before it goes through it is sure to be met with stiff opposition.

It is the contention of the miners' union leaders that the rule making it necessary for men to have experience in mining to obtain certificates is too valuable from a safety standpoint to be dispensed with.

Contention of Miners
With it changed so that a man would be permitted to mine coal with no practical experience, it is contended the number of fatal accidents would be greatly increased, enormous damage would be done to the mines, and that in the long run it is safe to say the tonnage would be depressed instead of increased. Mining is dangerous at its best, the miners declare, and that it would be a mistake to wipe out one of its chief rules tending for safety, just to comply with the wishes of men who believe they have found a means of increasing the anthracite output.

In a recent issue of the Miners Journal, the official organ of the International Union, it was pointed out that no attempt to wipe out the two-year eligibility rule on men applying for certificates will be countenanced by the miners. The Journal pointed out that this two-year rule is one of the essential regulations of mining, in that it keeps the inexperienced man from blasting coal, etc., and thus tends to add to the safety of all men working inside.

The Journal said one of the arguments made in behalf of the proposed change is that it would help relieve the growing scarcity of miners, yet in the local field it is contended that there is no real shortage of miners because of draft and enlistment. Instead, it is admitted by operators that the ranks of laborers, motor runners, drivers and general workers have suffered more than the coal cutters because of the war and that the mining troubles are due to their loss more than to practical miners. As a rule, most of the latter are above the present draft age, but with the others a big majority are between 21 and 31 years of age.

Urge Kennedy to Run
Considerable interest is now being manifested among miners in the anthracite field in the efforts being made at Hazleton to have Thomas Kennedy, president of District No. 7, become a candidate for the position of international vice-president, to succeed Frank Hayes, now president, and who took charge of the union after John P. White resigned. John Lewis, editor of the Miners Journal, is another candidate for the vice-presidency.

In Hazleton there is a sentiment that the anthracite field should be represented in the union by an international officer and that Mr. Kennedy would make an ideal official for the place. As president of District No. 7 he has been an active worker in the interest of the Miners' Union for several years. He is rated as a splendid organizer, is well versed on practical mining questions, and is an able talker. As yet he has not announced that he will seek the place, but even so four or five locals in District No. 7 have adopted resolutions pledging him their support, and as soon as his candidacy is definitely proclaimed it is safe to say other locals in the three anthracite districts will do likewise.

Escaped German Brings Five Comrades Back

Greensburg, Pa.—In a letter received from Lieutenant Paul Abraham, a member of the Westmoreland County Bar, an interesting incident concerning several German prisoners is related. On a certain date a captured German made his escape from the command with which Lieutenant Abraham is connected. A few days later the escaped prisoner returned with five of his comrades, who after hearing of the treatment given German prisoners by the Americans decided it was better than strapping the Yankees.

Weeks Unopposed For Republican Nomination

Boston.—Governor McCall announces he has reconsidered his decision to become a candidate for the Republican Senatorial nomination. His withdrawal leaves the field clear for Senator John W. Weeks.

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