

COLD FACTS IN COAL SQUABBLE

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prices, also have strengthened the workers' demand for better pay. They know that steam coal and buckwheat, the finer sizes, which used to sell at from \$1.50 to \$1.75 at the mines, now bring from \$6 to \$8. That the larger sizes—chestnut, stove and egg—which used to bring from \$4.50 to \$6 pit mouth, now is moving in increased volume at from \$11 to \$13.50.

Only a small part of these increases, they maintain, is absorbed by increased costs of production. Their labor, they contend, is being used to pile up colossal profits for non-union owners. Under present prices they feel they are not getting a rightful share of their labor's profits.

For every dime the miners have got in increased wages," one business man here told me, "the operators have put on a dollar to the price."

"Dollar for Dime."

Whether or not that is borne out by facts it is the common viewpoint of the general public here not connected with the mines.

At the little town of Tamaqua I noticed a handsome stone residence going up on the main street, imposingly magnificent beside the average run of houses in the town.

"Some house," I remarked to a couple of miners I was giving a lift into town.

"Yeah" one of them answered. "It's being built by—who lives up at Scranton. He's by way of being a bit of coal operator. He's building it for an aunt of his who lives in one of the company houses up the valley. Some change from the shack she lives in now, I'll say. Two bathrooms, an' everything!"

Washrooms Scarce.

If the aunts of men who are only "bits of operators" can be endowed with 14-room stone houses with two baths, out of the profits of coal, these men opined somewhat emphatically, certainly they, who dug it, ought to be able to give their women and children a home with a kitchen sink and one bath.

"For God knows a miner needs a bath-room if anybody does," the grimmest of them said. "But a lot of the companies don't even give us a wash-up room at the plant, let alone a bath-room at home."

Scarcely second to the direct increase in wages asked for is the demand for uniformity in rates between different collieries and for necessary equipment. One miner told me that he had been charged \$21 in two weeks for compressed air for his face-hammer.

"Plain robbery!" he declared.

"Government figures show the average of all mine costs in producing a ton of anthracite is less than \$5.50 a ton. The average price the operator now gets is double that. What we're asking wouldn't be a fair split on the difference, but it would help us to live a bit better. We don't want mansions and limousines, but we would like decent homes, enough food and clothes and some sense of independence."

CUNNING SCHEME FOR GAY'S SAYE

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our command to secure in the iron and steel industry of this country a total abolition of the 12-hour day at the earliest time practicable. This means a large addition to the present large numbers of workmen employed on an 8-hour basis, and that all others will be on a basis of 10-hours or less.

Without an unjustifiable interruption to operation, the change can not be effected overnight. It will involve many adjustments, some of them complicated and difficult, but we think it can be brought about without undue delay when, as you stated, "there is a surplus of labor available."

The iron and steel manufacturers generally of the United States, outside of the directors referred to, are expected to concur in the conclusion reached by the directors as above stated.

With high regards, we are, cordially yours,

E. H. Gary, Willis L. King, John A. Topping, Jas. A. Burden, W. A. Rodgers, L. E. Block, W. H. Donner, Severn P. Ker, W. J. Filbert, J. C. Dinkell, Jas. A. Farrell, Chas. M. Schwab, E. G. Grace, Directors American Iron and Steel Institute.

BOLSHEVIKI TRY TO KILL UNIONS

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hundred years has been demonstrating that democracy and labor unionism go hand in hand.

Great Britain, where modern trade unionism began, has been steadily growing more democratic for a century. With every increase of democracy, the British trade unions have gained in power and influence. In the United States, a republic founded on democratic principles, the unions have obtained a numerical strength second to those of Great Britain and an actual strength and influence second to none.

France, under the republic, has seen a steady growth of trade unionism. Belgium, Holland and the Scandinavian countries, all democratic despite survival of figure-head kings, have witnessed a continuous

growth of trade unionism.

In Russia, under the rule of the Czar and under the rule of the Bolshevik, the opposite has been the case. The Czar's government did all in its power to crush trade unionism and the organized labor movement contained only a small fraction of the million toilers in the Russian Empire.

The Bolsheviks took a leaf from the Czar's book and brook no unions except with Communist aims. As a result, millions of toilers are denied the right to organize on lines of their own choosing. In reactionary Spain, where autocracy and ignorant rule, the unions are weak and can do little to improve the condition of the workers. Violence from above has begotten violence from below and many of the Spanish workers have been driven to take refuge in anarchism, revolutionary syndicalism and other philosophies of violence and despair.

Perhaps among modern nations Germany under the Kaiser has been the only nation in which trade unionism grew under autocracy. There, the government, after first trying to smother the unions, permitted them to grow and won their support by paternalistic legislation. The government reaped its reward by using some of the unions to promote its imperialistic schemes abroad.

Democracies are the best friends of trade unionism, which explains why organized labor in the United States fights autocracy, whether it comes from the "left" or "right" of reactionary stand-patism. Labor knows that in democracy and its extension lies the hope of the trade unionism. So it strives for more and more democracy and encourages every move to make the government more responsible to the will of the people.

REDS DESPISE TRADE UNIONS

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greatest triumph. These unions are active in every movement that increases the intelligence and widens the capacity of their members.

Not only in better working conditions, with resultant better homes and healthier children, but unionism is the one force that arouses the people to endangered liberty and encroachment by privilege.

And this when critics sneer "5-cent increases" and jabber their phrases about future civilizations.

And this when the intelligentsia languidly flecks the ashes from his cigarette and yawns advice to "the working class."

But suppose these trade unions did nothing but raise wages. That alone would justify their existence. Let our dilittante critics read what the United States children's bureau has to say on the number of baby deaths due to low wages.

These trade unions do more, however. They establish labor papers, operate banks and co-operative stores, maintain labor colleges, homes for aged members, labor headquarters, life insurance, health insurance and old age pensions.

Every form of education and collective action is fostered and encouraged by them. Their standards of yesterday are rejected as they plant their banner of progress one step forward, today, tomorrow, and always.

No institution in the world can equal the progress and development of the North American trade unionists the past 25 years. Their independence, their standard of living, their capacity can not be approximated in any other trade union movement on earth.

Other movements may be theatrical, but for things accomplished the trade union movement of this continent is incomparable. And this with the immigration question, and its multiplicity of languages and ideals, which has made unification of workers by workers the greatest social triumph in history.

These facts are ignored by the revolutionist, who sneers that the goal of our order unions is a few pennies wage increase.

The sneers are logical. The revolutionist hates the trade union as heartily as does the industrial autocrat.

They hate the thing they can not dictate or control.

DEMOLAY AND RAINBOW ORDERS MAKE FRIENDS

The City Auditorium Tuesday and Wednesday evenings of this week was the center of attraction, for the Rainbow and DeMolay orders, the boys' and girls' Masonic organizations, staged clever minstrels to the delight of several hundreds of people attending the shows. There is much good talent among the boys and girls, and the singing, dancing and other features of the Minstrel were enjoyed by all who witnessed the performances.

Much credit for the success of the minstrels is being given to Alfred E. Smith, Master Councilor of Charlotte Chapter, Order of DeMolay. He was untiring in his work, as were many of those who assisted him. The successful efforts of these young people is but an indication of their great worth to the city of Charlotte on the morrow, when they will be the men and women of the city, with the city's destiny in their hands.

Watch the I. W. W.'s of the Pacific Coast. We've been telling you about the dangers therein.

FEUDAL REGIME OF COAL BARONS IN NON-UNION FIELDS

Within a few hours' ride of the National Capital 25,000 non-union bituminous coal miners have been on strike for 14 months to obtain the right of free speech and free assembly—rights presumed to be guaranteed to all citizens of the Constitution of the United States. This mining region in central and western Pennsylvania is owned and governed by barons who would discount many overlord's of the feudal age.

Some of the uncontrovertible facts surrounding this condition were presented to the United States Coal Commission at Washington last week in a statement prepared by John Brophy, president of District No. 2, United Mine Workers of America, which cause one to question whether the Stars and Stripes floats over all of free America.

District No. 2 of the United Mine Workers has jurisdiction in central Pennsylvania over a bituminous coal region east of what has become known as the central competitive field. It has a membership of 47,000 union miners in the following counties: Armstrong, Blair, Bedford, Cambria, Center, Clarion, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk, Huntingdon, Indiana, Jefferson, Somerset and Tioga.

Around this center of unionism lie in an unbroken crescent the non-union fields of Somerset, Westmoreland, Cambria and Indiana counties.

"Those non-union mining sections of our district," says President Brophy in his statement, "are places where the spirit of American citizenship can not breathe freely. They are a continual menace to peace and order in the industry. For years we have received pleas from the miners working in these non-union mines asking us to come and help them organize, but even the entrance into a town where a non-union mine is located is prohibited to any one who has the slightest connection with the union."

The great coal strike of last year in the union fields caused the non-union miners of the region to muster sufficient courage to rebel, and most of them quit work. "The strike of the union miners was for a continuation of the wage rate," says President Brophy; "that of the non-union miners was for more—it was also a strike to end fear. They struck to obtain their rights as free Americans against the state of fear, suspicion and espionage prevailing in non-union towns; against a small group of operators controlling life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; they struck to put an end to the absolute and feudal control of these coal operators."

The statement quotes from the report of a commission appointed by Mayor Hylan of New York to investigate mining and living conditions in the region controlled by the Berwind-White Coal company, operating non-union mines, which said: "The Berwind-White Coal Company controls absolutely the Borough of Windber and other towns wherein its mines are located. It owns the banks, the theatre, a number of the public halls, the town newspapers and all the public service plants in Windber, all the public officials including the burgess (mayor), squires (justices of the peace), constables and the police."

It was further shown how the coal barons control the votes of their subjects in free America. "There was pressure brought to bear on every man," testified a former employe. "On election day we always had the men come out of the mines and sent them down to the polling place, and in lots of cases brought them back to finish the day's work. And we always presented them with marked ballots."

In this non-union region the companies own the houses in which the miners live and they are ejected for any infringement of the orders and rules promulgated by the barons. In some instances the companies own the land and permit employes to build houses thereon. In the village of Bitumen, where the Kettl-Creek Coal Mining company is the overlord, 67 miners owned homes erected on the company land and paid rent for use of the ground. When they refused to accept wage reductions they were ordered to vacate the premises. They refused and were finally ejected by officials controlled by the mining company. The miners lost all they had invested in the erection of houses in which to live.

"In many non-union towns the streets and roads and places of assembly are company owned, and if the company disapproves of a person he is thrown out," says Brophy. When a stranger appears in one of these company-owned towns he is immediately put under surveillance by private or town sleuths. A permit from the company must be obtained before he is allowed to transact business or look for employment. These permits read: "Permission is hereby granted (name inserted), though it is understood that in so selling he is not to enter into a discussion of the present labor situation either one way or the other with our employes."

F. R. Lyon, vice president in charge of operations of the Consolidated Coal Company, non-union mines, testified on April 27, 1922, before the court of common pleas of Somerset County, and admitted on cross-examination that all strangers are stopped and asked their business. The records show this colloquy: Question. If they (strangers) are going to visit a friend, do you stop them? Answer. All strangers are stopped and asked their business.

Q. If a man wants to go to the public postoffice can he go without the consent of the officers and guards? A. Yes, sir. Q. Isn't he stopped and asked to give an explanation of what he wants in there? A. He is asked his business if he is not known. Q. If he is not known he doesn't get in? A. Correct. If he is not known he doesn't get in? Such is the system prevailing in the closed non-union company coal towns in central and western Pennsylvania. The companies own the doctor and the hospital, the store and the houses, the streets and the public roads, the cemetery and the newspaper—and even the government postoffice.

"We have stated that the company owns the store in non-union fields, continues Brophy. "In some places there are other stores, but the miner must buy at the company store. After having their store bills deducted, also powder and fuse, and other things necessary for them to buy for work in the mines, many of the miners have no money coming to them on pay day. This state of affairs has existed for years in the non-union coal fields of Somerset, Westmoreland, Cambria and Indiana counties, where civil liberties are denied the workers."

Wages of non-union miners are cut without notice, unknown until they receive their deflated pay envelope. "Under such a system," Brophy tells the commission, "there is no bottom to the labor market. The men do not feel safe. They are in continual fear that they will not be able to pay for what they buy at the company store. The men want an agreement which will fix their wages. They look with envy on the organized miners and want a union to help straighten out their affairs."

Short weight is another grievance in these non-union fields. An example is given of No. 6 mine of the Forge Coal Company, operated on a non-union basis before the strike last year. Later the company recognized the union and the men gained the right to elect and pay one of their members to act a checkweighman. Before the strike loaded cars at this mine were one ton and 600 pounds. With a union checkweighman on the tipples the loaded cars now bring one ton and 1,000 pounds, a difference of 400 pounds to the car. When the union gained the right to protect the miners the empty car was weighed in the presence of witnesses and found to register 400 pounds less than given by the company to non-union miners when it subtracted the weight of the car from the total of both coal and car.

"Dead work" is another source of cutting down the pay in non-union mines. This work must be done before coal can be taken from the mine. Generally it consists of cleaning up piles of rock that have fallen from the roof, laying car tracks, etc. In union mines this "dead work" is paid for on an hourly basis. In non-union mines it is not paid for at all in most cases. If the men complain they are summarily discharged.

Since the strike of non-union miners began 14 months ago the operators have imported additional gunmen who are sworn in as deputy sheriffs or coal and iron police. They have evicted families from their homes regardless of whether condition or state of health of members of the family.

"Forcing these miners back to work, under non-union conditions will not settle anything," says Brophy. "They may go back to work but they will be embittered and will seize the first opportunity to strike for their rights again. Unless the miners are guaranteed free speech and free assembly; unless they can, if they so desire, affiliate with a labor union of their choice and enjoy collective bargaining with their employers; they can not be called citizens of a free country, but are in fact slaves of an industrial feudalism. Until their constitutional rights are made secure, there will be no peace in the mining industry."

President Brophy concluded his written statement by requesting the commission to recommend to Congress such action as will end the autocratic control now exercised by non-union coal operators to prevent their employes from joining labor unions or otherwise enjoying such liberties as are guaranteed them by the Constitution of the United States.

HAS THE SUPREME COURT ASSUMED MORE CONTROL?

The United States supreme court has smashed the Kansas "can't strike" law by annulling the industrial court's power to set wages and enforce its decisions.

On its surface, this is a distinct advance, and supports labor's fight against a vicious proposal. But it would be well if labor examined the reasoning of the court and compared same with the court's decision nullifying the District of Columbia women's minimum wage law.

In the latter case the court declaring itself sternly against setting wages by law.

The court said that if a women's minimum wage law is justified "in the face of the guarantees of the fifth amendment," the "field for the operation of the police power will have widened to a great and dangerous degree."

This sounds like the final word against setting wages by law, but in the Kansas case the court now says: "The extent to which regulation may reasonably go varies with difference kinds of business. The regulation of rates to avoid monopoly is one thing. The regulation of wages is another. A business may be of such character that only the first is permissible, while another may involve such a possible danger of monopoly on the one hand, and such disaster from stoppage on the other, that both public concern and power of regulation."

Compare this with the court's clear-cut position to a law that would guarantee working women a living wage.

In the women's case the court was definite. In the Kansas case the court let it be understood its decision against wages by law is not its last word.

The court hints (in the Kansas case) that workers may organize to the point of a "possible danger" of "disaster from stoppage." In that event, says the court, wages by law would "come within the public concern and power of regulation."

In the District of Columbia case the court let it be known that it does not fear the organized economic power of working women, who can do little harm to big business and gigantic monopolies.

The court, it will be noticed, expresses no such fear in the case of women working in stores and restaurants. They can not challenge monopoly, as can men workers in the steel or mining industry, for instance.

In reversing the wages feature of the Kansas law the court let it be known that at some future time, and under different conditions, wages by law could be legalized.

That portion of the Kansas decision may prove a pathbreaker. It may pave the way for future action by the court to uphold wages by law when the issue is not involved with price fixing on the goods business men sell.

This can be done, the court shows, when there is "a possible danger" of "disaster from stoppage." Then "regulation of wages" will be legalized.

Labor must not overlook the importance of the court's quiet intimation that it will "regulate" wages under certain conditions.

When John Marshall ruled in the Marbury case, more than 100 years ago, that the supreme court can pass on acts of congress, the decision did not alarm the populace, and it was not used for years. But it was not forgotten by those who profit by court usurpation.

The court is not sensational when it assumes new powers. It never alarms the populace.



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