

REPLY TO BARON'S

Baer Answers Statement of Miners.

DEMANDS HELD UNJUST

Peace Terms Allow No Recognition of Union.

EIGHT HOURS IMPRACTICABLE

Leader of Mine Operators Holds the Earnings of the Men Are Not Less Than Callings Requiring Equal Skill and Training.

BAER'S REPLY IN A NUTSHELL.

The demand for 20 per cent increase in wages is arbitrary, unreasonable and unjust. Less than a 10-hour day is neither practicable nor desirable. The rate of wages is not lower than in other sections of the anthracite coal fields. The earnings of the men are not less than in other callings requiring equal skill and training. Employees of economic habits have been able to save money. Children are not unnecessarily forced into the breakers, instead of being supported and educated on the earnings of their parents. The terms of appointment of the peace commission precede the United Mineworkers of America from any recognition.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 11.—President Baer of the Philadelphia & Reading Coal & Iron Company, has filed with the Anthracite Coal Strike Commission the reply to that company to the statement made by John Mitchell, president of the United Mineworkers of America, concerning the points involved in the anthracite coal strike. Following is the full text of Mr. Baer's statement: "To the Anthracite Coal Strike Commission, The Philadelphia & Reading Coal & Iron Company, replying to the demands of John Mitchell, representing certain anthracite mine workers, says: "First—That the collieries situated in the Counties of Schuylkill, Northumberland and Columbia, and that it did operate, previous to the strike inaugurated by the United Mineworkers of America, 10 collieries and four washeries and that at that time it had 28,223 employees in and about the mines.

"Second—The first demand for 20 per cent increase upon the price paid during the year 1901 is arbitrary, unreasonable and unjust. This company denies there is any similarity between the mining of anthracite and that of bituminous coal to make wages paid in one a standard for the other. It avers that the bituminous fields extend over many states of the Union; that they differ widely in the physical and local conditions which largely control wages; that the work of mining anthracite coal is not substantially similar work to the mining of bituminous coal, and making all necessary allowances for differences in conditions, denies that the rate of wages in the mines operated by this company is lower than that paid in the bituminous coal fields, whose coal output competes actively with the products of this company's mines.

"Third—This company denies that the present rate of wages is lower than is paid in other mines in the same locality and controlled by like conditions. This company is fully informed as to the average annual earnings in the bituminous coal fields, but it avers that nearly all of its former employees who during the past five months worked in the bituminous fields have returned to the anthracite coal region, preferring to work in the anthracite mines. And it further avers that the annual earnings of the anthracite mine workers are largely reduced by their refusal to work as many days as it is customary to work in other occupations, and that by reason thereof this company is subjected to great losses and that the annual earnings of its employees diminished.

"Fourth—This company denies that the average annual earnings of the men working in the anthracite coal fields are less than the average annual earnings of occupations requiring equal skill and training.

"Fifth—This company denies that the rate of wages in the anthracite coal fields is insufficient to compensate the mine workers. In view of the dangerous character of the occupation in relation to accidents, liability to serious and permanent disease, the high death rate and the short trade life incident to this employment.

"Sixth—This company avers that, while the sixth specification is too general and vague for specific answer thereto, it is true that the anthracite coal region is almost entirely dependent upon the anthracite mining industry, is one of the most prosperous in the United States, and that the employees of economic habits have saved and invested their earnings in houses, building associations and other property, and that deposits in savings banks and National banks aggregating millions of dollars have been made by such employees; that the standard of living is equal to that of the average American workman, and that the towns and cities are better than any mining towns in the bituminous coal fields of the United States. "This company denies that the alleged increased cost of living has made it impossible to maintain a fair standard of life upon the basis of the present wages, or secure any benefit from increased production, and that the condition of the workman is poorer on account of it.

Education in Reach of All. "This company further denies that the children of the anthracite mine workers are prematurely forced into the breakers and mills instead of being supported and educated upon the earnings of their parents, because of the low wages of such parents, and that such wages are below the fair and just earnings of mine workers in this industry. It avers that the State of Pennsylvania makes large annual appropriations to schools, and that the school districts levy local taxes for school purposes; that textbooks are supplied from public funds, and that the laws provide for compulsory attendance at public schools. In the County of Schuylkill this company paid for school taxes in the year 1901 \$26,000. The local school boards are elected by the qualified voters of the townships, boroughs and cities. The means of education provided by the state, through its system of free schools and compulsory attendance, are not fully utilized because of the failure of local school boards to enforce compul-

ery attendance, but the wages paid are ample to insure a good common school education for all children in the coal regions desiring to attend school.

Child Labor Laws Obeyed. "No boys are employed in and about the mines and breakers in violation of the statutes fixing the ages of employment. In addition to provisions for education, ample hospitals for the care of the sick and injured are maintained in the anthracite coal regions. This company avers that there is not anywhere else in the world a mining region where the workmen have so many comforts, facilities for education, general advantages and such profitable employment. "Seventh—This company denies that the second demand, for a reduction of 25 per cent of hours of labor without any reduction in earnings for all employees by the hour, day or week, is either just or equitable, and avers that the reasons assigned in support of the demand are impracticable in so far as they relate to the mining of anthracite coal. The certified miners, under present conditions, seldom work eight hours a day. The greatest cost in the production and preparation of anthracite coal for market is not in the cutting of the coal. Many employees are paid by the month, the pumping continues day and night, the machinery is expensive, and the cost of coal is largely conditioned on the

PRESIDENT OF AMERICAN BANKERS' ASSOCIATION.



MYRON J. HERRICK, OF CLEVELAND, OHIO.

collieries running full time. The output is entirely dependent on the quantity of coal a certified miner is willing to cut daily, and because of this it is seldom practicable to work the breaker full time.

"Eighth—This company, replying to the third demand, says it has no disagreement with any of its employees about the weighing of coal. The quantity is usually determined by measurement. The coal is mined by the ton, it is customary and necessary to make allowances for slates and impurities. But this company does not mine by the ton. It denies that there is anything unreasonable or unfair in the method it has practiced in arriving at the measurement of coal from its mines.

"Ninth—This company, replying to the fourth demand, avers that the coal mine workers of America are primarily a bituminous coal organization; that bituminous coal is a rival competitor in the market with anthracite coal, that ever since the advent of the United Mineworkers of America in the anthracite fields the business conditions in the anthracite mines have become intolerable; that the output of anthracite has decreased, discipline has been destroyed, strikes have been of almost daily occurrence; men have worked when and as they pleased, and the cost of anthracite has been greatly increased. At the Shamokin convention of the United Mineworkers of America, referred to in the statement, it was resolved: "That the United Mineworkers at any colliery, when the employer refuse to become members of the organization or wear the button, the local governing such colliery, after using all persuasive measures to get such employees to join, and failing in each, shall have full power to suspend full operation at such colliery until such employees become members of the organization."

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