

COST OF LIVING IS TARGET OF MINERS

Workmen Want Opportunity to Live and to Save.

CONDITIONS ARE PROBED

Blame Is Placed on Employer and Employe Alike for Ignorance Which Causes Grief.

BY CARL W. ACKERMAN. (Copyright by the Public Ledger. Published by Arrangement.)

CHARLESTON, W. Va., Nov. 8.—(Special)—"Get this grub a little cheaper and we'll quit kickin'." Working alone in a "room," drilling a seam of coal in mine No. 5 of the Solway Collieries company properties on Paint creek, West Virginia, was a miner who had been laboring seven years in the mines. After I had asked him a number of questions about the United Mineworkers, the government injunction, hours of work, wages and the strike during my investigation today of the sentiment among the operators and miners, he shouted the above parting greeting.

In that one statement he voiced the views of every miner I talked with during a 140-mile journey into the coal fields of this state along Cabin creek and Paint creek, two tributaries of the Kanawha river, which flows through a beautiful, rich valley into the Ohio river. It did not matter how many queries I put to the men, or the subjects I inquired about, the answers always hinged upon the high cost of the necessities of life, and when the miners said they were not interested in a six-hour day or a five-day week, despite the attitude of their national leaders, they always concluded:

"I haven't got enough to live on; all I want is enough to keep my family and save some money."

Savings Are Small. "But haven't you saved some money?" asked one of the party. "Yes, I guess I have saved a little, about \$100 last year, but I ain't saved nothing this year," said one of the men.

"We don't get a chance to accumulate money," another miner interjected, "but the capitalist class saves all the time."

Many additional statements were made by the miners. I was struck with, but the keynote of their conversations always touched on the cost of living and their desire for money. I found no criticism of the government's nationalization of the coal fields. No one expressed any sympathy for the six-hour day with the possible exception of one negro who wanted more time to work in his garden during the summer, but I found all the men hypnotized by their leaders, ready and willing to do anything their officers ordered.

From the standpoint of a newspaper investigation the conditions were ideal. At 7 o'clock in the morning and other newspaper correspondents and I left Charleston on a special train accompanied by the leading coal operators and bankers of this community. These men escorted us to the mines, where we had every opportunity of meeting and questioning the men without any interference or hindrance from the operators and when we left the miners we piled the business leaders with just as many and perhaps as difficult questions. We tried to learn both sides of the dispute. We did succeed in drawing out both the operators and mba.

After I had spent the day in the company of both miners and operators, after I had been into the mines, the miners' homes and the company stores, I was impressed not so much by the differences between the two as by the ignorance of all. One of the operators said this was the first visit he made to his mines in more than a year, another complained that he could not talk to his men, that they were suspicious of him and his motives. The gulf between the operators and miners was so evident that to me, as an outsider and an observer, nothing which either side might say about the other would surprise me.

The miners do not know the operators' problems. The miners have been reading only the arguments of their union leaders. The operators have done nothing to present their side to any controversy. When I asked one of the operators about the 35-cent loss of bread sold in his company store he answered that the 2-cent increase in price was due to the weight of the loaf, and when I asked him whether the loaf was fair and honest it did not matter to him whether or not his employees knew the weight of the loaf, but the companies have done nothing to inform the miners or refute the charges of the agitators.

Fair Return Wanted. As a result of my investigation today in the chief union fields of this state, I was impressed by the testimony of the men because it confirmed my observations elsewhere that the real, honest, hard-working American worker is not radical and that all he wants is a fair return for his work and a margin of profit on his labor to enable him to enjoy some of the luxuries of life and accumulate a saving for later years.

What the American worker wants is fair play and he does not believe the employers are fair today. He believes his labor leader and the agitator, but at heart he would be fair to the employer if the employer would take it upon himself to take labor more into his confidence. As long as there is a gulf between labor and capital here in the coal fields of this state or anywhere there will be misunderstandings and the misunderstandings today are colossal.

Out of the minor misunderstandings regarding the prices of food in the company stores grow the great misconceptions regarding profits, but so far nothing has been done to correct either in the minds of the miners and those workers, who believe that the companies are robbing them in their stores naturally except the advice of the agitators and propagandists when they tell the men that everything belongs to them and that all they have to do is to organize and take what they want.

MINE INJUNCTION SCORED

(Continued From First Page.) nonemployment existing in that industry. "The high cost of living has prevented itself in perhaps a more serious form in isolated mining camps

LEGION-OF-DEATH WOMAN COMES TO AMERICA AS WIFE OF ARMY OFFICER.



MRS. AGNES MENEFFEE.

Mrs. Agnes Meneffee, after four years' service in the woman's battalion of death, during which time she was wounded twice and twice decorated with the Cross of St. George, has arrived in the United States as the wife of an American artillery officer and will miss her home with him at Covington, Ky. She was a prisoner in Germany six months. Her maiden name was Agnes Rostkowska.

than in large industrial centers. There is usually not the same opportunity for the miners in the mining camps to make their purchases to such advantage as is presented in other localities. Their isolation prevents this. "The United Mine Workers, in their convention held during the month of September in the city of Cleveland, adopted a positive declaration demanding improved conditions of employment for the miners. They further instructed the officers to proceed to obtain by negotiations with the operators the working conditions that the convention unanimously adopted.

"There were almost 2200 delegates seated in the convention, representing 500,000 organized miners. They further positively and explicitly instructed their officers that unless an agreement was reached on or before the first day of November, 1919, the resolution of the convention calling for a strike on November 1, 1919, should be communicated to the membership. There was no alternative except for the officers, who are elected by the membership, to carry out the direct instructions of the membership or resign from their positions as officers, in which event confusion would result."

Officers Are Refused. "The officers of the mine workers, with their scale committee, entered into conferences and discussions with the operators in the city of Buffalo. They stated at the conference that they had full power to give and take in the conference. The operators refused to make any offer whatever. Later on the miners answered the call of the secretary of labor and further endeavored to reach an agreement, but failed. The officers then proceeded to carry out the instructions of their membership and communicated the result of the failure of negotiations and by order of the convention the strike automatically took effect November 1, 1919.

"The machinery which has existed for years and which has been successful in bringing about agreements between the miners and the operators, still exists and they, as representatives of the miners, were, and are, ready and willing to enter into negotiations without reservation to reach an agreement. At this time, our government interjected itself and applied for an injunction.

"An temporary restraining order was granted by a federal judge which restrains the officials of the miners from in any way advising their membership on the situation or contributing any of the moneys of the mine workers to the assistance of the men on strike, also restraining them from discussing, writing or entering into any kind of a convention with their membership on the strike situation.

Rights Held Infringed. "The government then proceeded to further invade the rights of the miners, not only by restraining the miners, their officers and members from furthering the purpose for which the men contended, but went to the further lengths of demanding from the court an order commanding the officers of the miners' union to recall and withdraw the strike solicitation and the court complacently complied and issued the order.

"Never in the history of our country has any such a mandatory order been obtained or even applied for by the government or by any person, company or corporation. "Both the restraining order and the injunction, insofar as its prohibitory features are concerned, are predicated upon the Lever act, a law enacted by congress for the purpose of preventing speculation and profiteering of food and fuel supplies of the country. There never was in the minds of the congress in enacting that law or in the mind of the president when he signed it that the Lever act would be applied to workers in cases of strikes or lockouts.

Premises Are Given. "The food controller, Mr. Hoover, specifically so stated. Members of the committee having the bill in charge have in writing declared that it was not in the minds of the committee and the then attorney-general, Mr. Gregory, gave assurance that the government would not apply that law to the workers' efforts to obtain improved working conditions. Every assurance from the highest authority of our government was given that the law would not be misapplied. "In the course of President Wilson's address to the Buffalo convention of the American Federation of Labor,

REPORT OF MINERS' SURRENDER DEFEED

John L. Lewis Says Statement Is Premature.

OFFICIALS WILL CONFER

Court's Order That Strike Be Called Off to Be Considered; Outcome Is Problematical.

INDIANAPOLIS, Nov. 8.—John L. Lewis, acting president of the United Mine Workers of America, tonight denied that he had agreed to comply with the order of the federal court here yesterday to call off the strike of bituminous coal miners of the country after 6 P. M. next Tuesday, evening. "Statements to the effect that I shall or shall not comply with the mandatory proceeding of the injunction writ are unauthorized and premature," he declared.

"Mr. Lewis' denial was made in view of a reported statement of counsel for the miners yesterday that Mr. Lewis and Secretary-Treasurer William Green proposed to obey the court's order but that they could not speak for other officials. While Mr. Lewis would not comment further on the subject, others indicated that the statement of the miners' attorney was intended to show a willingness of the two officials to call a meeting of the international officers, district presidents, executive board and members of the miners scale committee for tomorrow to consider the court order.

Officials Are Retained. "The meeting of union officials has been set for 10 o'clock tomorrow morning. Several of the district officials, including Frank Farrington, president of the Illinois district, arrived today or tonight, but none of them would make any statement. "The outcome of tomorrow's conference is problematical.

Many of the union men have contended ever since the strike was called that as the strike was ordered by the full convention of the miners in Cleveland only another convention could authorize calling it off. Another phase of the situation in connection with the court order presents the question of what action the government might take if the miners as individuals refuse to obey an order of officials rescinding the strike order. Government officials are taking no action pending the expiration of the time given the union chiefs to withdraw the strike order. C. B. Ames, assistant attorney-general in charge of the government's proceedings against the mine workers, has returned to Washington. John E. Vreighton, bureau of investigation official, is still in Indianapolis and with local government officials is charged with enforcement of the court's injunction. "The operators still maintain the attitude adopted after the strike was called—that is, to reopen negotiations as soon as the miners resume work."

LINCOLN, Neb., Nov. 8.—The coal situation in Nebraska, particularly Lincoln and its suburbs became extremely serious today. At Havelock all the five dealers were sold out and several families were without fuel. At Bethany, another suburb, the situation was equally serious.

MYSTERY MAY BE SOLVED

SCREAMS OF PUYALLUP WOMAN HEARD BY COUPLE.

Location of Spot Where Mrs. Elizabeth Bryan Was Murdered Likely to Be Fixed.

SEATTLE, Wash., Nov. 8.—New and sensational evidence furnished to the prosecuting attorney's office Saturday by Richard A. St. John, county auditor, officials believe, may solve the mystery as to the spot where Mrs. Elizabeth Bryan of Puyallup was murdered in the early morning of October 20. Buttle told how he and Mrs. Buttle left their home at 4 A. M., October 20, when they heard the screams of a woman and traced the screams to a lot about six blocks from the residence of Mrs. Anna Nemitz and W. F. Ealy, her son, who are charged with the murder. "The police have contended that Mrs. Bryan was carried to the spot in Mount Baker park where it was found eight days after the Butttles heard the screams."

H. I. CURRY FUNERAL SET

Boom Tender, Drowned in Slough, to Be Buried at Salem.

Herman I. Curry, boom tender at the North Portland box factory, who was drowned in Oregon slough Saturday night, was a son of Mr. and Mrs. William H. Curry, 1317 Drummond street in St. Johns. "The body is now at Chambers' undertaking parlors and will be sent to Salem, where funeral services will be held Wednesday afternoon. Interment will be in the I. O. O. F. cemetery. Owing to the inability of the authorities to secure reliable information Saturday night following the tragedy the name of the man was first reported as Robert Curry."

Australian Visits University.

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, Eugene, Nov. 9.—(Special)—Professor A. F. Radewicz, professor of German languages at the University of Melbourne, Australia, visited the University of Oregon campus Friday. He is on his way from Australia to visit his home in Belgium, which he has not seen in 16 years. He is traveling through this country visiting a number of the larger American universities and observing methods of teaching. He intends to visit the University of Washington.

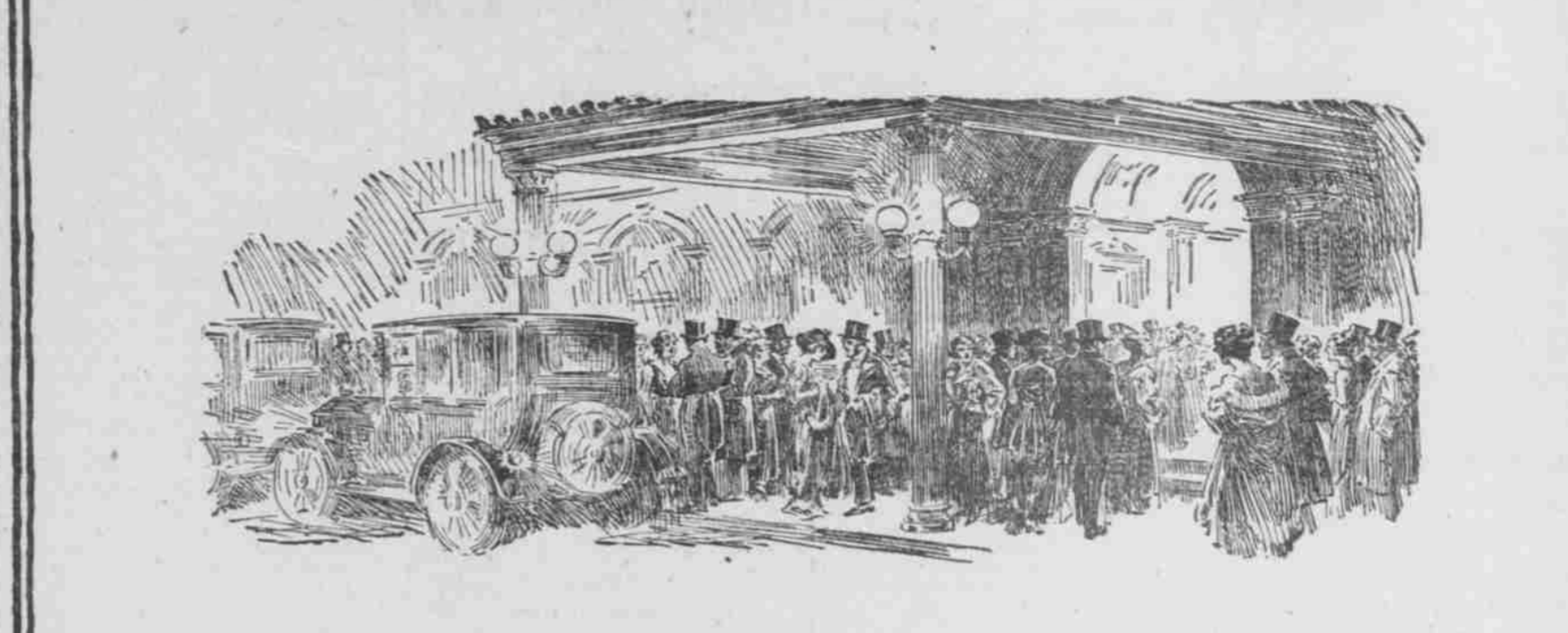
Legion Ball to Be Big Affair.

ABERDEEN, Wash., Nov. 9.—(Special)—The preparations and the address of the sale of the American Legion ball at the Electric Park pavilion, will surpass in number of

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attendants any that have heretofore been held on the harbor. Every man who wore a uniform during the period of the war has been requested to wear it again on the evening of November 11.

Aberdeen to Get Car of Sugar.

ABERDEEN, Wash., Nov. 9.—(Special)—Word has been received here that a carload of sugar is on the way from San Francisco and will arrive the first of the week. The sale of

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Aberdeen Contract Awarded.

ABERDEEN, Wash., Nov. 9.—(Special)—Three bids have been received for the viaduct portion of the trestle project at the east entrance of the city. The Grays Harbor Building company's bid was lowest, at \$28,212.50 and \$30,125.50 for iron and concrete railing respectively. The Grays

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Harbor Construction company bid \$29,376.25 and \$30,391.45; August Wallin, \$32,654.75 and \$34,084.75. The city engineer's estimate was \$30,000 for the iron railing.

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