

REASON FOR COAL PRICES IS EXPLAINED

Instability in the Bituminous Industry is the Fundamental Cause of High Prices.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 20.—Instability in the bituminous coal mining industry is the fundamental cause of high prices and the fuel shortage which has menaced the American public repeatedly in recent years, the United States coal commission held today in a preliminary report of its fact-finding investigation lead before congress.

Labor troubles, transportation difficulties, and over-development of the industry in mines and manpower to a point where it is much larger than necessary to supply demand for its product—these are the three assigned as among primary causes for the condition. The exact bearing which these have upon the existing situation, the commission said, it intended to study in its further inquiry.

Regarding the possibility of another general coal strike after April 1, the report said the commission "has reason to believe that an agreement will be reached in the near future that will avert any widespread cessation of mine operations in union fields on April 1."

The commission added that its work in promoting industrial peace by ascertaining and publishing reliable data on wages, earnings, employment volume, profits and costs involved in coal production will proceed with that understanding. Reference was made to the exchange of communications between the commission, miners' union officials, and representatives of operators which has lessened the danger of the strike prospect.

Six members of the commission, John Hays Hammond, chairman, Dr. George Otis Smith, former director of the Geological Survey, Clark Howell, editor of the Atlantic Constitution, former Vice President Marshall, Charles P. Neill, and Dr. Edward T. Devine, signed the report as rendered, while Federal Judge Abschuler, whose judicial tenure has prevented his qualifying formally for service as commissioner, attached a memorandum approving the views of his colleagues. The commission was created by congress after the 1922 coal strike to investigate the entire coal problem.

"There have been so many and such complex factors operating in the coal industry to prevent the free play of economic forces," the report said in concluding "that a very detailed and comprehensive investigation is required before a valid conclusion can be reached. The inquiry involves the whole question as to what is best for the people, free competition, government or private ownership, regulation or control in the coal industry. The problem is of so great moment, with reference not only to the theories of government but also to the economic life of the republic, that the view of the commission must be left to its final report."

"There can be no satisfactory agreement as to wage rates, and no lasting peace between operators and men, unless steadier employment can be provided. There can be no satisfactory solution of our transportation problem so long as the railroads are subjected to sudden peak loads of coal traffic at the season when the demands of agriculture and industry are at their height."

"The commission believes that the

public interest in coal raises fundamental questions of the relation of this industry to the nation, and of the degree to which private rights must yield to public welfare. It may be that both private property in an exhaustible resource and labor in a public service industry must submit to certain modifications of their private rights, receiving in return certain guarantees and privileges not accorded to purely private business or persons in private employ."

With anthracite coal problems, the preliminary report dealt only briefly. Search would continue, it was said, into the reasons which left the United States, though "rich beyond all other nations in its wealth of coal resources" with "a national coal bin too often depleted," with prices higher than seem warranted by the wealth of coal available and with general public concern and dissatisfaction as to fuel supply.

"There has been profiteering in the industry in the sense that excessive profits have been taken at times by many operators, brokers, and retailers; profits that have been disproportionate to the cost of the coal," the report said in part. "But this commission has not yet obtained the figures specifically required by the act in order to settle this question. A thorough examination of profits is already under way. "Run-away markets" for coal in 1920 and 1922, the commission continued, followed prolonged cessation of mining operations due to disagreement between employer and employees, but high prices also ruled from August, 1916 to March, 1918, and for that period "some other explanation of the high prices and distress must be found."

"The responsibility of settling disputes," the report remarked as to the present labor situation, "rests primarily upon the industry. The commission therefore warned miners and operators alike that the country looks to them to settle their own disputes and to reach an amicable agreement when the present contract expires."

In the future, it was added, the commission would go into causes of the disruption of industrial relations that has so frequently hampered the conduct of the industry, and the report set forth claims and counter-claims of both employers and employees in reference to controversies in West Virginia and Pennsylvania. Inability of railroads to transport coal produced, it was added, has frequently been suggested as a primary cause of scarcity and high prices, and further investigation to be made in conjunction with the Interstate Commerce Commission, with the Federal Trade Commission, and with the Federal Reserve Board.

"Only by investing money in a transportation system vastly in excess of reasonable requirements," in report observed on the railroad aspects, "may the people of the country expect the railroads to make up within a few weeks the consequences of the five months' suspension during 1922 of a large part of coal mining."

In the over expansion of the industry, the commission concluded, was to be found the reason for the fact that bituminous mines operated only 149 days during the whole working year of 1921, when no strikes intervened. This condition, it was further found, had tended to get worse in recent years, for in 1890 its figures indicated that miners over the country worked 213 days out of the year. The investigation had early disclosed, it was added, the existence of "too many mines and too many miners."

Seasonal character of part of the demand for bituminous coal, with consequent inequality of demand through the year for services of workers and of transportation equipment, the possibility of storage in ameliorating these conditions, and the necessity for studying methods of improving distribution systems were points emphasized as under study.

Iowa Heavyweight Beats Brennan



Floyd Johnson (inset) advanced another step toward his opportunity to face Jack Dempsey for the heavyweight title, when he defeated Bill Brennan, veteran war-horse, in a 15-round bout in Madison Square Garden, New York. Picture shows Brennan slipping to the floor in the fifth round.

COYOTES KILL LARGE DEER

THE PARK, Jan. 20.—Mrs. Liddle Vanderventer returned home from her visit with her relative in Cove, Clarence Vanorder, repaired the stove at the schoolhouse.

Bert Van, on his way to meet his wife from Cove, stopped and had dinner with Clarence and Maud Vanorder, leaving his three children in the care of Mrs. Vanorder, until his return.

Elva Vanorder, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Vanorder, is still on the sick list. Her school mates are very anxious to see her back to school.

Clarence Wood has hauled 30 cords of wood, all in logs, in 17 loads, from the Hill ranch to his place on the Cove road close to Union. He had it cut by Mr. Groat who owns a drag saw made at the Blue Mountain Iron works in Baker. He can haul in three days.

John Hunter, reports that Mrs. Foster Steel of Union has "The finest little baby" she ever saw, going to days old and weighs but 7 pounds. Both baby and mother are feeling the very best. The baby's name is George Herbert Foster.

There is talk of Al Stonedahl coming to exhibit timber up in this part of the country. Mr. Stonedahl is agent for the Scott Lumber and Timber Company.

By letter it was learned that Harold Boyle is doing nicely since the last news received, where it was feared of blood poisoning setting in his amputated leg.

Urania K. Hunter reports that E. F. Ingraham, logger, who is logging at North Powder, came home to spend

Sunday, in Union, returning Sunday evening.

Miss Ida O. Hunter passed a satisfactory examination at the North School of Union, where she will be promoted from the 5th to the 6th grade—this will cause her to change schools, now going to the South side school.

Miss Urania E. Hunter reports that Cedric Gale, fruit man of Union, was taken sick with the "flu-pneumonia," which seems to be raging around Union.

Trout Seen in River.

The south side of the hills along Catherine Creek are bare. 18 inches of snow at the level. The creek is flowing through this mantle of pure white, without a bit of ice on the surface, just as clear as a crystal. Large Dolly Varden trout are seen in great number at the bottom.

On the summit of divide, on the Medford-Union road there is a foot of snow. In spite of this J. W. (Bud) Fay, is hauling the mail with a light buggy.

Coyotes Kill Deer.

"Little Jack" Hunter, found a large doe, which was killed by the coyotes, on the ridge between the main road and the creek. He saw where the doe came down from Buck Pine Springs, and in several places, where the deer had fought them. There were two coyotes, and at last he saw where the fiercest battle was fought ending in the killing of the doe. Her throat was literally torn to shreds. Most of her hind quarters were ate away. She was of the 8½ deer type, and weighed about 200 pounds.

There is not so much illegal shooting of deer done this winter, as it is generally done winters before. It may be that people are realizing that the deer are fast becoming extinct. But there should be more hunting for the best coyotes and the cougar. They are quite numerous and they kill many deer.

IMBLER HAS BIG SMOKER

IMBLER, Jan. 20.—Imbler was the scene of a smoker Thursday night, in the vernacular of the local populace, a boxing match, but smoke is the correct term in this case because the local gastronomists sure set the world afire in a few furious if not fast bouts.

First, "Red" Martin and Frank McKennon came out upon the scene of battle and started pointing at their respective prizes. This went on for some time to the disgust and chagrin of the populace in general and the battlers, Frank McKennon in particular. Then flashed upon the scene two well known farmers, Roy Wells and Will Myers, who to the amazement of the bewildered audience, began waxing and wilding at each other.

After participating in this unusual performance for some time, they way a final, final adieu and departed. Act three is enacted by Ivan White and Oscar Howell, they go through a series of postures from various angles and registering a variety of emotions. While seems to speculate on making gestures in the general direction of Howell's nose. In connection after the boxing matches a picnic social was held. Many pies were sold, the proceeds for a general public fund and to pay for the hall.

Mr. and Mrs. Ray Altendorf left for their home in Portland Wednesday, having finished their work for the Glatic Production Company.

The Farmers Union members held a business meeting in the K. P. Hall Thursday afternoon.

Mrs. V. E. Lang entertained the Methodist Aid Society members at her home Thursday afternoon. Delightful refreshments of pickles, sandwiches, fruit salad, cake and chocolate were served.

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