

LAWRENCE SAYS COAL DISPUTE IS IN BETTER SHAPE

Miners and Operators Are Optimistic That Central Conference Will Be Able to Agree.

HARD DEBATE IS PREDICTED

Apathy on Part of Public Now Strike Has Ended May Result in More Difficulty, Is Belief.

By David Lawrence

(Copyright, 1919, by The Journal) Washington, Nov. 13.—Chances for a settlement of the issues between coal operators and miners once and for all are excellent. Government officials are more than hopeful—they are optimistic. Now that the controversy over the injunction proceedings is at an end, the government feels free to turn its whole attention to the merits of the grievances and claims of each side. The general public unfortunately may lose interest simply because the strike has been called off but the tasks of mediation here are only beginning now.

Yet the meeting on Friday in itself established a big precedent which goes to the heart of the difficulties between miners and operators.

FIELD WAS DOMINATED

Heretofore the mine owners in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Western Pennsylvania, or what is known in coal parlance as "the central competitive field," have nominated a separate agreement with their employees and all the other coal miners in other states have been required to accept the settlement in the central competitive field as a basis for adjustment in their own districts.

This has resulted in all sorts of inequities, and while the miners in the central district were ready and willing that all wage scales should be settled at a national convention at which all operators and miners were represented, the operators in the central district feel that such an arrangement might be disadvantageous to them.

OLD SYSTEM FAULTY

But the department of labor has asked all parties to come here, and while the secretary of labor unquestionably will make an effort to get the operators of the central district to abandon their old policy of negotiating a separate agreement in that district as a basis for other districts, no time will be lost by conciliators of the department of

labor in sticking on that point. Rather will they urge then the making of separate agreements concurrently. But even this will be a great step forward for all the losses in time will be eliminated, which, heretofore, have caused so much discontent when the miners, say in Kentucky or even Eastern Pennsylvania, were compelled to wait the outcome of negotiations in the central competitive field before they could enter into agreements in their own districts.

SINGLE SCALE NEEDED

It so happens that because of the strike of last week the operators in the central competitive field are now in a position to present any demands to their principals in the central competitive field to reach an agreement. It is not to be denied that the operators in all districts outside of the central competitive field as well as inside of it to get a new wage agreement or understanding as soon as possible. This may be negotiated separately and in different buildings here and the groups representing different districts may not meet together to discuss the matter, but the final agreement will be concurred in and the miners throughout the country will be advised simultaneously of the wage scale so that some standardization or uniformity may be obtained and thus the disadvantages and abuses of separate negotiations will be eliminated.

DISPUTE IS CONFUSING

The layman will find difficulty in following the merits of the peace negotiations that have been instituted. One of the technical character of the demands and answers thereto made by miners and operators. But certain fundamental principles are very little about the dispute which has threatened the welfare of millions and which required the whole judicial power of the government to hold it back.

First—With respect to wages. The miners do not work every day in the week, nor do they have an opportunity to work eight hours on such days as they do work. This is not the fault of the operators in many cases, because the latter cannot get cars from the railroads. And if the railroad does not furnish cars the miners do not work, and the mine operators do not pay the miners a cent for time loss caused by failure of the railroad to supply cars.

EMPLOYMENT NOT STEADY

Second—When there is talk of a six-hour day it does not always mean that the miners do not want to work. But it often means that they want to get enough money at the end of the week to support their families. A man might get a wage of \$5 a day on an eight-hour basis but if he only had three days at eight hours and the other days at two or four hours, or possibly no work at all, due to car shortages, he would not be earning \$30 a week.

Third—The miners were given their last increase in wages because Dr. Harry Garfield, fuel administrator, said they needed it to meet the cost of living. That was more than a year ago. And the cost of living has increased. But here the government steps in to say that it cannot increase the cost of living. It will try to decrease the cost of living rather than increase wages. The situation with respect to the coal miners is in this respect the same as with the railroad men, who have been held in check by the government's promises to reduce the cost of living.

SAY OPERATORS FAVORED

Fourth—The coal miners saw the fuel administration come to an end, they saw operators abolishing working men's committees, they saw the national war labor board dissolved, they saw the industrial conference in Washington and other

steps between capital and labor broken up. The miners saw the price of coal go up to the consumer beyond the maximum price fixed by the coal administration and they saw the war end so far as the operators were concerned—all restrictions as to their distribution and price being removed—and they therefore insisted that the war was ended so far as coal miners were concerned. And they sought new contracts.

Now the fuel administration has been revived and a maximum price for coal is fixed. The Wilson administration has always been blamed by the miners for permitting restrictions to be removed that affected the coal operators and then insisting that the Lever law and war time conditions were still in effect. But that is past now. The miners reluctantly rescinded the strike order and obeyed the injunction of a federal court. Now they are wondering whether the same hand that compelled them to obey the mandates of justice on the one hand will enable them to get a new wage contract the moment the government does decide that the war is officially ended.

CONFIDENCE IN WILSON

The department of justice has asked for an extension of the Lever law. Possibly if the government continues its stance of war time condition will be maintained sufficient at any rate to impress the coal miner that the Washington administration is not discriminating against him.

Fortunately the government had available a man like William B. Wilson, secretary of labor, who will preside at the conference. He has the confidence of both sides. He won his reputation for fairness when as a walking delegate years ago in the coal fields of Pennsylvania he negotiated agreements on behalf of the miners. He knows the coal controversy from "A" to "Z," and his early affiliations will not prevent him from seeing both sides fairly, but will enable him to urge upon his former associates the acceptance of conditions that seem to him reasonable and just.

TEST COMING FRIDAY

To all intents and purposes Secretary Wilson represents the whole government, for President Wilson reposes faith in his judgment and ability. The skill of Secretary Wilson, who has been a factor in the settling of many disputes which the public hears very little about, because they are local or sectional, will be tested to the utmost when the miners and operators get together on Friday. But the government is determined that there shall be a settlement and that all the moral forces at its command shall be made to make operators and miners see that both must agree to remove the causes of perennial friction and discontent in the coal fields of America.

Isaac Watson, Aged Recluse and Civil War Veteran, Passes

Albany, Nov. 12.—After a life of seclusion for over a quarter of a century, Isaac Watson, a veteran of the Civil war, died at his home near Sodaville last Saturday at the age of 90 years. Mr. Watson came to Linn county 27 years ago from South Dakota and has lived alone on a small hill farm, being supported by a pension and produce raised on his farm. It is said to have been wounded seven times while a soldier, two of the bullets remaining in his body until his death.

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LUMBER FIRM CHARGED WITH FRAUD; PETITION IS FILED FOR RECEIVER

State Bank of Rainier Brings Action Against Yaquina Bay Railway & Lumber Company.

Petition for the appointment of a receiver for the Fischer-Storoy Lumber company on the grounds that the firm had fraudulently transferred assets from the Yaquina Bay Railway & Lumber company last January to its account in consideration of \$100,000 and also request for nullification of the transfer were filed in the circuit court Wednesday by the State Bank of Rainier, holder of a \$17,000 judgment against the defunct Yaquina bay concern.

J. O. Storey, A. W. Fischer, W. H. Wehrung and A. Welch are named as defendants. This is the third action charging fraud which has been filed lately against Wehrung, who is president of the Hilleboro National bank. It is the second action alleging fraud and transfer of assets to evade creditors filed against J. O. Storey.

It is charged in the present suit that in the organization of the Fischer-Storoy Lumber company Storey was given half the stock without consideration other than payment by him of the liabilities of the Yaquina Bay Railway & Lumber company, amounting to \$200,000. The

firm had assets which, it is averred by plaintiff, were transferred to Storey. Now they state that Wehrung, Storey and the others are attempting to dispose of these without notification to creditors. Storey, they say, is insolvent, and if the assets are successfully gotten rid of, the creditors will be without recourse.

Court Accused of Bias, Change of Venue Requested

Circuit Judge Robert Morrow is accused of prejudice and bias in a petition for change of venue filed in the circuit court Wednesday by Paul C. Dormitzer, attorney for Julius Smith Ward, who is charged with the robbery of Jack Grant's club on April 28.

A jury before Morrow disagreed last week at the conclusion of Ward's first trial and Dormitzer says he does not want to take any chances of the second trial coming before the same judge. The attorney accuses Morrow of "familiarity with the witnesses for the prosecution" and intimates that the jurist was swayed in favor of the state because of the one time political pull and influence exerted by Jack, for the robbery of whose place the prisoner was being tried.

"Immunity which Grant enjoyed in conducting gambling places" is evidence, asserts Dormitzer, of the strong local influence which he enjoys politically.

\$1000 Paid for Lauder's Picture

Los Angeles, Nov. 13.—(U. P.)—Mrs. Charles M. Schwab, wife of the steel magnate, paid \$1000 for an autographed picture of Harry Lauder at an auction here last night. The money goes to war charities.

DE VALERA DUE IN PORTLAND TONIGHT; BANQUET ARRANGED

Irish Leader to Deliver Main Address at The Auditorium Next Saturday Evening.

The stage is all set for the advent of Eamonn de Valera, "president" of the "republic" of Ireland. He will be greeted at Union station at 7:10 tonight by city and state committees and escorted to the Portland hotel.

De Valera will be the center of a banquet in the hotel at 8 o'clock. He will speak at Vancouver, Wash., Friday night and at The Auditorium in Portland Saturday night. Headquarters of the American commission for Irish independence have been opened at the Portland hotel and a conference of state committeemen with De Valera is scheduled for 3 p. m. Friday. Dr. Andrew C. Smith is chairman of the state committee and other members are: Bernard Daly, Lakeview; J. H. Pierre, La Grande; A. A. Smith, Baker; James Devlin, Pendleton; Judge Butler, The Dalles; John Kilkenny, Heppner; J. P. Heidy, Medford; W. Kellner, Medford; P. H. D'Arcy, Salem; J. P. Dooley, Albany; H. J. McDevitt, Marshfield; Dr. Donnelly, Mount Angel; Frank McMenamin, Heppner; T. W. Sullivan, Oregon City; Pat Gallagher, Ontario; P. J. O'Rourke, The Dalles; Hugh O'Kane, Bend; Frank

Davey, Salem; Thomas Brown, Salem; C. P. Lonergan, Pendleton; Sam Dolan, Corvallis; Henry Lyons, Albany; W. P. O'Brien, Astoria, and Hugh McLain, Marshfield.

A party, headed by Dr. Smith and Thomas Mannix, will meet De Valera at Kalama, Wash., this afternoon.

Committee Appointed To Arrange Meeting For Boy Scout Heads

A committee to devise means for erecting a Boy Scout cabin to house offices of the Portland council, probably in one of the city park blocks, was appointed by the officers and executive committee of the Portland council Wednesday. The committee consists of C. C. Colt, Charles P. Berg and H. V. Carpenter. The council plans to erect an inexpensive yet artistic building of rustic architecture. Several carpenters have offered to put up the building. A sketch of the proposed building has already been submitted in colors, and is on display at the Scout headquarters in the Northwestern Bank building. The council authorized one of its members not yet decided upon to accompany the Scout executive, James Brockway, to Berkeley, Cal., where a Pacific coast conference will be held January 14-15. Boy Scouts will act as guides next week to the Pacific International Livestock show visitors, working from Liberty temple.

Two Aviators Killed

London, Nov. 13.—(U. P.)—Lieutenant Ross and Roger Douglas, Australian aviators, who started today to fly to Australia, were killed when their machine crashed to earth at Surbiton.

The Lottery Man will soon be here!



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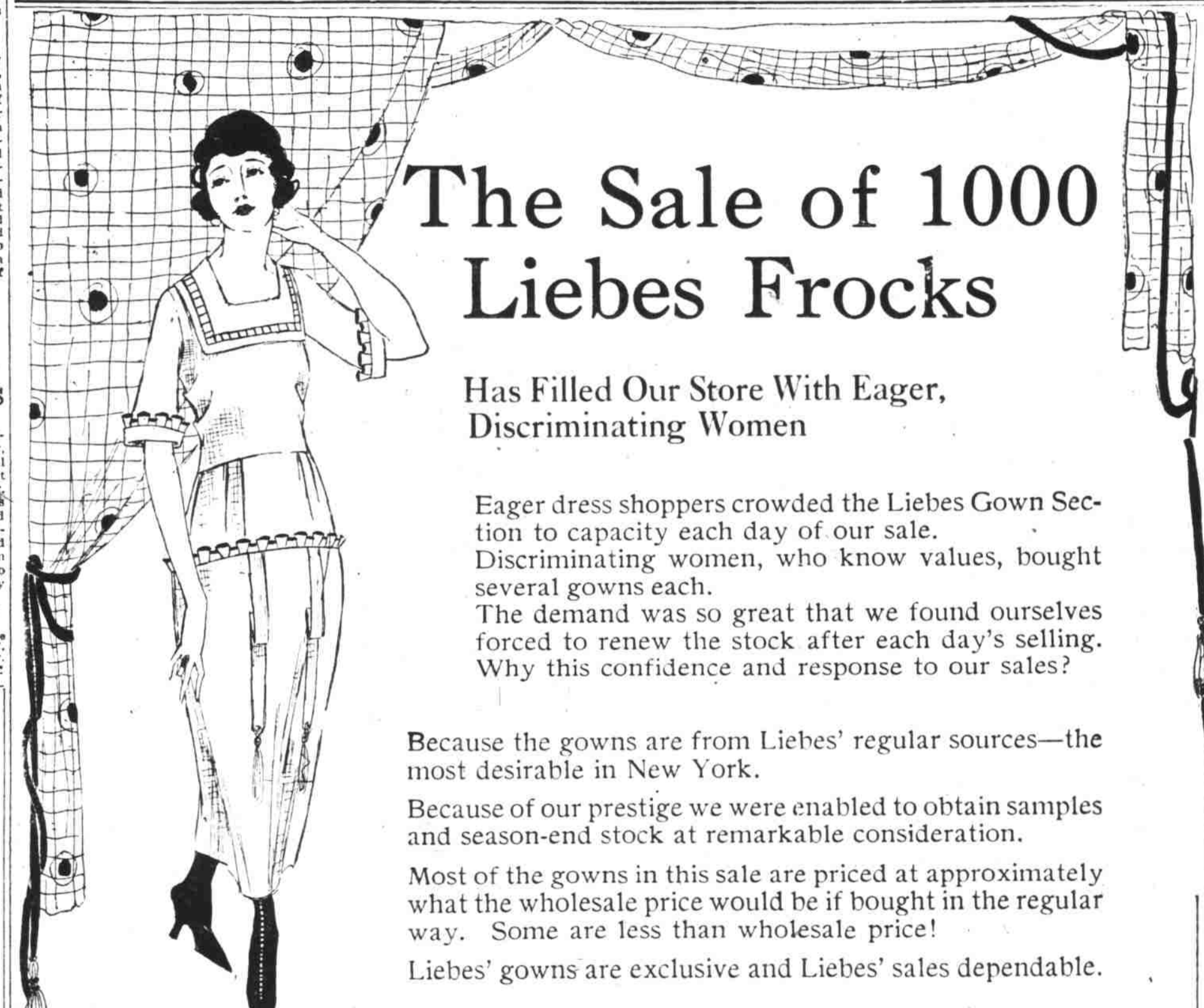
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