

SIDELIGHTS ON THE GREAT COAL STRIKE

INTERESTING FACTS REGARDING STRUGGLE BETWEEN MINERS AND OPERATORS.

GREATEST IN HISTORY OF COUNTRY

War Cloud Has Been Gathering for Some Time—Diggers Have Laid Aside Formidable Fund to Push Fight—Proposition to Incorporate Union.

BY CLYDE ALISON MANN.

The facts underlying the great strike in the bituminous coal fields are the most remarkable that have been involved in any labor question in the history of the United States, as the strike will be the greatest strike in the country's history.

Few of the moving facts became apparent during the joint conferences at Indianapolis. They had their origin in the previous strike in the bituminous fields and the remarkable recruiting to the ranks of the United Mine Workers of America which followed upon the heels of the strike in 1902. The opportunities in organization shown then appealed to the element of the miners which previously had scouted the idea of organization, and this element has proved to be, as it got more and more into the harness, a radical, even socialist element—much more radical than the leaders of the United Mine Workers or the older membership in that body.

Miners Well Prepared.
Through the check off system, the collection by the cooperators of union dues and fines, a system which existed through the foolish indulgence of the operators, an enormous strike fund has been piled up, the total being today at least \$3,000,000 in all the district and national treasury. There is a fund of \$950,000 in the Illinois treasury alone. This is a sum which would go but a little way in paying strike wages, but was a sum so large that the new element in the United Mine Workers had fixed their eyes upon it greedily with jealous misgivings of what might be done with it. In the ranks of the miners, therefore, the majority sentiment was in favor of radical demand, which their leaders knew were wholly unlikely to be granted under the existing conditions. John Mitchell and his lieutenants were put in a position of choosing between continuing to lead their men and subscribing to the demands of the radical majority, or being thrown from their high position and trampled upon by thousands of union members. Such a situation among the miners was known to exist and that a strike was likely has been known for months to many of the big operators, the rail-

was important to his ambition. Consequently, after standing out at the first joint conference and declaring the advance demanded was impossible, he made a sudden change which obviously will aid his political interests, a change which has been interpreted by the press and public as due to orders from the "steel trust" that the advance must be granted the miners if that be the price of peace.
This change on the part of Robbins aroused a bitterness of feeling among the smaller operators of Illinois, Indiana and Ohio which never could be assuaged. In joint conference Commissioner Philip Penna, of the Indiana Bituminous Coal Operators' association, challenged the miners to grant the coal companies of those three states the same conditions as those which prevail under the miners' agreement in the Pittsburg field, and declared that if they would do so the operators not only immediately would grant the 12 1/2 per cent. advance in wages, but would furnish the miners their powder free.

This challenge was directly aimed at the stand of Francis L. Robbins, who was proclaimed a traitor to the cause of the soft coal operators. If apparent fairness was a bombshell in the campaign of Robbins and the miners as well. It brought no further result than a hot discussion. The mystery of it is uncovered in one underlying reason for the strike.

The Great Industrial War.
So after three days in the final struggle in joint conference all efforts to

men will undoubtedly go to the non-union coal fields in Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama and West Virginia. After a protracted strike the union has been driven out of Alabama and the mines are run on the plan of an "open shop."
For weeks both sides of this giant struggle between labor and capital have been maneuvering for position, like great armies. One cause of delay before the final breach between the operators and miners was in making these maneuvers in tactical moves of one side and then the other.
When a disagreement seemed probable President John Mitchell, of the United Mine Workers, secured a letter from President Roosevelt, urging that a second effort be made to prevent a strike, and tried to put the responsibility for the strike upon the operators.
In return the operators promptly agreed to a second joint conference, to be held at Indianapolis, beginning March 19, and which was prolonged for ten days.

The third move on the battle field was Mitchell's announcement that the Pittsburg Coal company (with an output of 20,000,000 tons per annum) would compromise by granting an advance of 5.55 per cent.
The operators made a counter-move by proclaiming Robbins a traitor to their cause and not representative of their will.
Mitchell made a flank movement by declaring the railroads were responsible for the failure of peace negotia-

the miners through their organized offices. The hard work of the conservative leaders is the national organization has accomplished very much, but the most desperate situation has been brought about by the increasing numbers of the radical and socialist element, which regards a strike too lightly.

Would Incorporate Union.

During the final joint conference at Indianapolis the Illinois coal operators began advocating the incorporation of the United Mine Workers of America, its assets to consist of the amount of strike fund accumulated at this time or on hand at any time. This is the first case known where employers have definitely urged the plan which theorists in discussing labor troubles have urged as a remedy. Economists of distinction have urged that the incorporation of unions would diminish the number of strikes, practically do away with violation of contracts between employers and their men, and give both capital and labor an equal standing before the people. No less a person than the general manager of the Illinois Central railroad's coal company, A. J. Moorshead, was sponsor for this movement, which may grow to historic importance.

Mr. Moorshead is of English birth, and in England the miners' unions are incorporated. "Employers never have been willing to urge the unions with which they do business to take advantage of the corporation laws," said Mr. Moorshead. "In England violations or abrogation of contract is very rare, for the unions are financially responsible when incorporated. If a contract is violated by the employer, he or the corporation is now responsible to the unions or their members; the reverse should be true, and if the miners are earnestly seeking equality and fairness in their relations with employers they ought to be willing to assume this financial responsibility."

The Illinois Coal Operators' association took no action, but favored the plan and it is likely later to be given formal recognition by the association. What such action might lead to in the relations of labor to capital cannot be predicted, but it is an important development of the question which each year grows more important of solution.

Following are the statements of the leaders of miners, John Mitchell, and of the bituminous coal operators, John H. Winder, of Ohio.

John Mitchell: "The American people will place the responsibility for the miners' strike at the door of the railroads owning the big coal fields. They will also urge this great industrial conflict to the men who have large stocks of coal stored away out of which they purpose to make vast fortunes."

John H. Winder: "I look upon the situation as a business disagreement between the miners and the operators, and not as a strike. A suspension of work will follow our adjournment without agreement upon a new working contract. I do not predict the shutdown will be attended with violations. No attempt will be made, I think, to operate the mines with non-union men."

PROVED HIS RIGHT TO DRINK

Unknown Lawyer Went to Some Trouble to Get Even with the Judge.

A western lawyer says that he was once in a court in Missouri when a young man most fastidiously dressed sauntered into the temple of justice. None of the officials of the court had ever seen him before, and as the proceedings were unimportant and somewhat tedious, it chanced that the stranger attracted some attention, relates Lippincott's Magazine. On his part he eyed the judge narrowly, "sized up" all the attorneys, drummed loudly on the bench in front of him, and finally rose and sauntered up to the bar, where he poured out for himself a glass of iced water.
The judge presiding, a nervous and testy old fellow, had himself observed the young man, and by his frowns had given evidence of his disapproval. When the stranger had boldly marched up to the bar and had taken the water, it looked as if the judge would boil over with indignation at this exhibition of temerity, amounting almost to contempt. "That water, sir," roared the judge, "is for attorneys and other officials of this court."
Whereupon the strange young man turned red and left the courtroom. But the court was to see more of him; for in about half an hour he returned, bearing in his hand a roll of parchment. The judge now glared at him in the most savage manner, but the young man flinched not. Finally, during a lull in the proceedings, the eccentric young person addressed the court:
"Your honor!"
"What is it, sir?"
"I wish, your honor, to submit to this honorable court, my certificate of admission to practice in the supreme court and all other courts of this state."
"Well, what of that?" growled his honor.
"Simply this, your honor. Now that I have presented the proofs of my admission to the bar, I would now move the court that I be permitted to drink from the official pitcher."
The young attorney got his water.

CONVERSATIONAL COMPARISON.

"Mr. Binx isn't very original," said the woman with a kindly disposition; "but he never says anything that isn't true, and he is always the same."
"Yes," answered Miss Cayenne. "He has precisely the conversational merits of a cuckoo clock."—Washington Star.

VESUVIUS AGAIN ACTIVE VILLAGERS PANIC STRICKEN

Many Homes Have Been Abandoned and Churches Are Crowded With People Praying for Deliverance from Peril.

Naples.—The inhabitants of the villages in the vicinity of Mount Vesuvius are in a condition bordering on panic. Many homes have been abandoned for the open air, although there has been a thick fog all day and the atmosphere has been dense with volcanic ashes and the fumes of subterranean fires. The churches are crowded day and night with people praying for deliverance from an impending peril, manifestations of which are heard and felt in explosions which resemble a heavy cannonading and in the tremblings of the earth which are constantly recurring.

The main stream of lava proceeding from Vesuvius is 200 feet wide, and it flows at times at the rate of twenty-one feet a minute, destroying vegetation before the stream reaches it. The peasants of Portici, at the west foot of Vesuvius, cleared their grounds of vineyards and trees in the effort to lessen the danger from fire, and resisted the progress of the lava to their utmost.

The population of Boscoreale, on the southern declivity of the mountain, have sought safety in flight, and Boscoreale, to the eastward, is also threatened. Women of this village, weeping with fright, carried a statue of St. Anne as near as they could go to the flowing lava, imploring a miracle to stay the advance of the consuming stream.

The cemetery at Boscoreale has been invaded by lava. The scene at night is one of mingled grandeur and horror, as from the summit of Vesuvius there leaps a column of fire fully a thousand feet in height, the glare lighting the sky and sea for many miles.

BLAZE AT PORTLAND.

Chamber of Commerce Building Burns, With Loss of \$100,000.

Portland, Ore.—The most spectacular fire which ever occurred in Portland destroyed the eighth, the top story of the Chamber of Commerce building Friday afternoon and was the indirect cause of the death of Homer H. Hallock, right of way agent of the Willamette Traction company, formerly for twenty-five years an employee of the Oregon Railroad & Navigation company at Pendleton, Baker City and Umatilla. Mr. Hallock, who was one of the best known railroad men in the northwest, was in the Commercial club when the fire broke out. He seems to have become suddenly mad, and despite the efforts of several men who strove to restrain him, jumped down the light well onto the roof of the central court, eight stories below, and was instantly killed. The property loss is estimated at \$100,000.

DARING ROBBER CAUGHT.

Swiss Police Land Ringleader of Russian Bank Thieves.

Zurich, Switzerland.—The ringleader of the band which robbed the Mutual Credit bank of Moscow of \$437,500 March 20 has been arrested here. He is a young Russian who arrived in Zurich April 3, and had been drinking heavily. The police took him into custody on the charge of intoxication and found among his belongings a wallet filled with Russian bank notes. When the prisoner became sober he voluntarily confessed that he had headed the band of nineteen men who robbed the Mutual Credit bank of Moscow.

TO FORTIFY PANAMA.

Plan of Army Experts is Laid Before Taft.

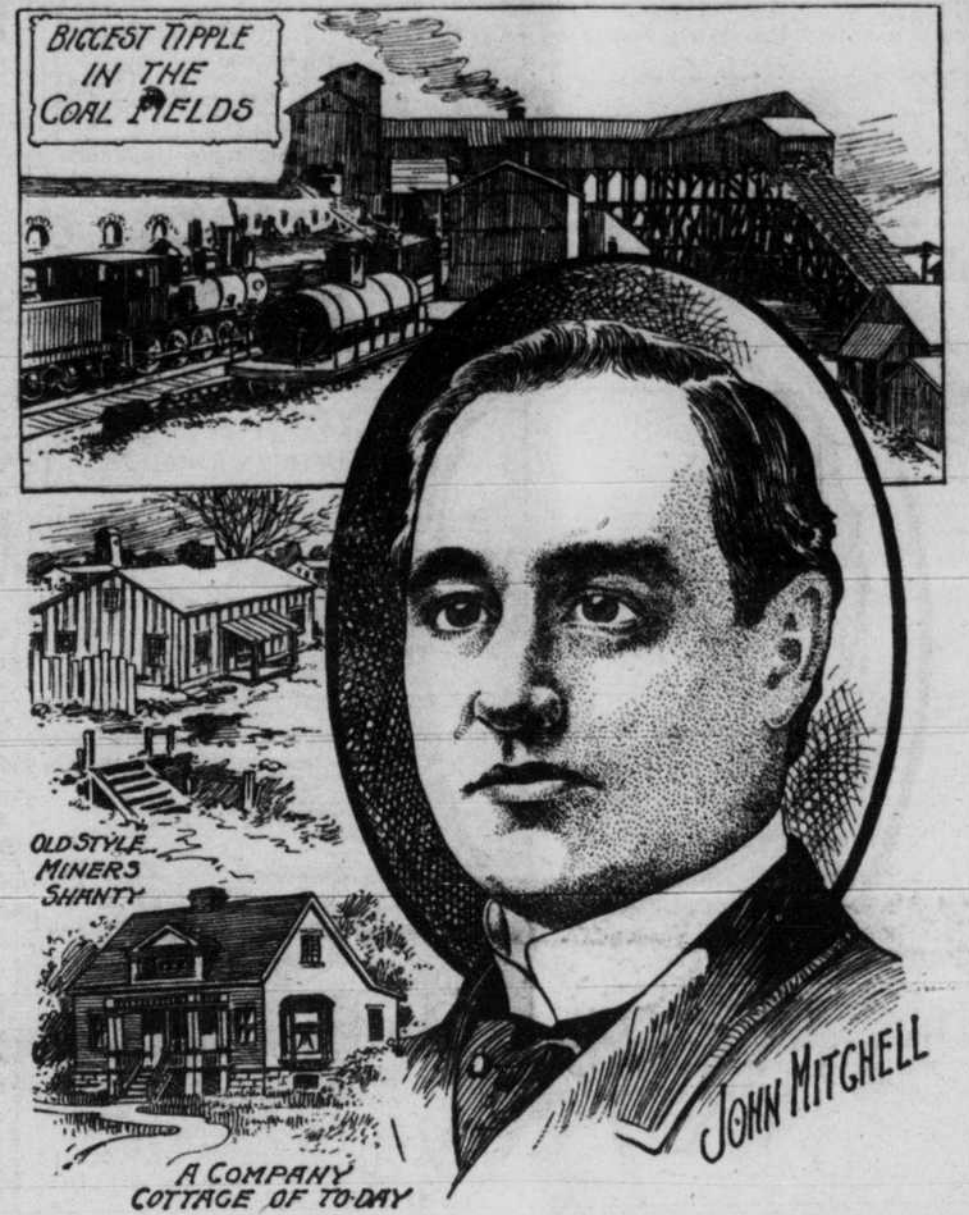
Washington.—A plan for the fortification of the Panama canal, drawn by the general staff of the army, which believes the fortifications necessary, has been placed before Secretary Taft. The canal commission thinks the fortifications should be built. A nice question of policy is involved in the matter and it will be carefully considered. Secretary Taft has taken up this subject with the president and Secretary Root, and it has been decided that the project shall be laid before congress.

Indians Sulking Over Refusal to Join Wild West Show.

Washington.—The nature of the trouble that has been brewing among the Apache captives at Fort Sill, incident to which is the threat of the Indians to forcibly break away from the post, is explained at the war department as the result of the refusal of the authorities to let the Indians go on the road with a Wild West show. These Indians, under their old chief, Geronimo, have been technical captives at the army post for many years past.

St. Louis Laborer Swallows Poison in Despair.

St. Louis.—After spending all day Saturday at the headquarters of his union, where he learned that there was no prospect of a settlement of the building trades strike, John McManis, a stone mason, returned home and swallowed carbolic acid after declaring to his wife that he would rather be dead than idle. He died within a few minutes. He had been forced into idleness for a month because of the strike.



JOHN MITCHELL

avert the strike failed. The coal operators of the "central competitive field" framed an appeal to President Roosevelt to investigate the facts of the situation and determine the justice of the case by arbitration. This was done by the operators after all hopes of peace had failed, but it did not avert the strike, although it was hoped that it might shorten its length.

The present strike involves more men than any other the coal industry has known in this or any other country. Practically all the miners in Illinois, Indiana and Ohio are members of the United Mine Workers, and all went out. They number:

Illinois	53,000
Indiana	16,000
Ohio	36,000
The strike includes also the southwestern field and involves in	
Missouri	8,000
Kansas	10,000
Indian territory	5,000
Texas	7,000

and it also stops the clank of many tipplers in Iowa, West Virginia, Michigan and Kentucky.

Probably all the miners in western Pennsylvania will be ordered out, to the number of 130,000.
What will be the result of this tremendous industrial war? How long can it endure? The daily bread and very existence of 3,000,000 people depend upon the wages which will be sacrificed. Will the struggle be comparatively peaceful or will the turbulence which has marked most strikes be used by the less self-controlled miners to enforce the demand which has been refused?

Much depends on the results of the negotiations between anthracite operators and their miners, for if peace overtures fail in the anthracite field as well as the bituminous, the struggle will be a titanic one, reaching from the Delaware to the Missouri river and south throughout the soft coal fields of Kansas, Indian territory and Oklahoma to Texas. It is not at all improbable that not less than 500,000 coal miners will be loafing before the end of April. No time of the year could be better for a protracted siege by the workmen, and that is one of the elements of strength which determined the strike long before the conferences were begun. The suspension will be at the beginning of the growing season, when little garden patches dotting the states of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Indian territory and Texas will be looked to for the main support of the hundreds of thousands of families and their millions of individuals whose income has been cut off. Thousands of these idle

and vehemently proclaiming that an investigation should be made of the relations between the coal companies of the soft coal fields and the railroads.

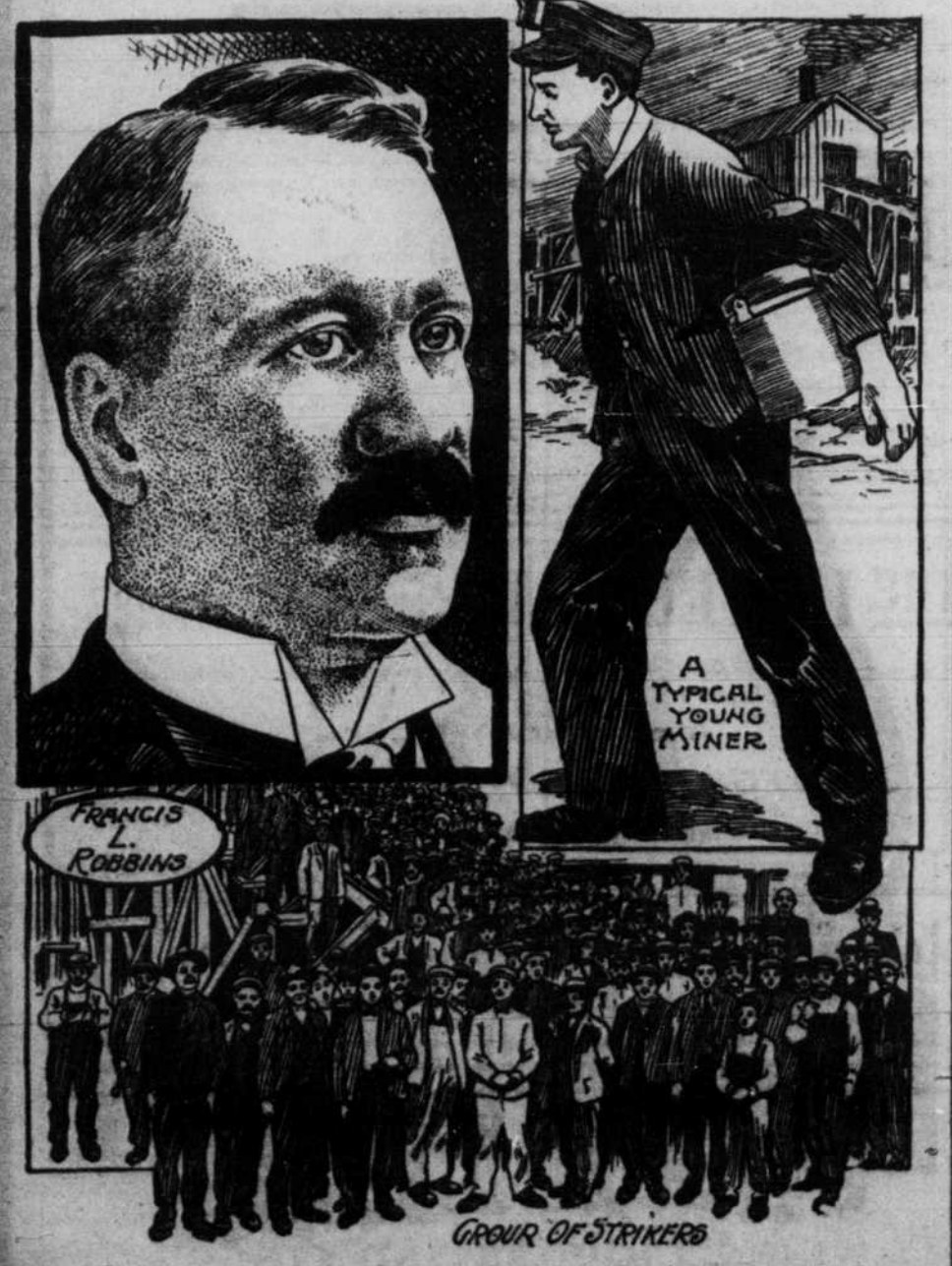
The operators retorted there was nothing in it and that Mitchell was simply pandering to public prejudice against the railroads.
Mitchell jockeyed for the position of asking "restoration" of a wage scale that was in force one year, the year of 1903, trying to make the operators appear in the position of refusing a wage scale which previously had been in force, notwithstanding (he claimed) the steel trade and railroads now were prospering wonderfully.

Average Wage of Diggers.

Reports of labor commissioners of the various states give the average number of days which coal miners in each field work and give the average daily wage at \$2.42. Many of the miners earn, when they work, from \$4 to \$8 and even \$10 a day, but there has been an overproduction of soft coal and an influx of coal from non-union mines which has restricted the operation of the mines in Illinois and its sister states. The miners then earn through the year an average of \$2.42 per day. The statistics of the state of Indiana permit comparison with the wages paid to the butcher, the baker and the furniture maker; the butchers being paid an average of \$2.19 per day, bakers \$2.04 per day, and the furniture makers \$1.87 per day. Quarrymen, whose work is similar, but not underground, are paid an average of \$1.40 a day. The average wages of engineers and firemen of stationary plants is \$2 per day, that of brick makers \$1.85 per day, and brewers are paid \$2.35 per day.

There are occupations for which higher wages are paid than coal mining, but they are not numerous.

The changes in the coal fields in the conditions of the miners and their families during the last ten years are so striking that they furnish one of the best examples of the progress and prosperity which is becoming each year more general throughout the United States. The traditional habits of the miners have not altogether been changed, but there are many more miners who now own their homes, and there is a smaller percentage of the men who generally spend their liberal wages at the saloons and in dissipation. The typical home of the miner is no longer a shanty, and the conditions within no longer are those of squalor. The miner's child is now in the schools, when in former years they ran the streets, dirty and ragged. These changes have been wrought by their unions, and the operators have found great advantage in dealing with



GROUP OF STRIKERS

roads and the priests of the foreign churches in the mining districts.
On the side of the operators, conditions existed which also foretold an abrupt clash which would be likely to result in strike. At the threshold of the "central competitive district," comprising the states of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and western Pennsylvania, lie the non-unionized bituminous fields of West Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee. The West Virginia field, particularly has been an aggressive competitor in the soft coal market of the middle states. In the last year West Virginia coal has gone into the very stronghold of the "central competitive

the joint conference of the miners and the operators, first in February and again March 19. During the second convention another influence was brought to bear which added certainty to the expectations that the miners and operators could not agree.
Why Robbins Turned.
Francis L. Robbins, president of the Pittsburg Coal company, the biggest corporation operating in the bituminous fields, will be a candidate for the United States senate at the next session of the Pennsylvania legislature. His announcement has not been made public, but in Pennsylvania it is a well-known fact. The miners' vote