

WORKERS  
OF THE  
WORLD  
UNITE!  
THE WORLD  
FOR THE  
WORKERS



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ALL WEALTH  
-UNTO  
LABOR  
IT SHOULD  
BELONG

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## BRITISH MINERS IN CONVENTION.

**600,000 miners represented. Over 100 resolutions considered. Nationalization of coal mines demanded, with full workers' control even of coal export and colliery banking questions. Miners' executive given power to call national strike without following old custom of balloting of members upon the question. Six-hour working day to be inaugurated four weeks after peace is declared for miners. Five-day working week also demanded but not so unanimously. Demand for higher rate of compensation for miners injured during employment.**

During the past week the annual convention of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain has been held, attended by 179 delegates. This is an organization with 600,000 members. It is affiliated both with the annual Trades Union Congress and with the Labour Party and at the last Labour Party Conference in London it paid \$12,000 in affiliation fees and sent about 170 delegates. The Federation has increased by about 40,000 members since its last convention at Glasgow twelve months ago and Robert Smillie, the president of the federation and of this annual convention fully expects to add another 100,000 members to the federation before this year is finished.

In his presidential address to the miners' delegates Smillie began by saying that it was his intention to voice his own opinions rather than those of his executive or of the miners themselves. This remark is indicative of the movement I have before referred to that is going on amongst a large number of our trade unionists. Smillie is a bit of a Pacifist or perhaps he would himself personally sooner accept the term "a partisan of peace by negotiation." There appears to be no doubt that these views he holds are certainly personal to himself and are by no means shared by the great and overwhelming majority of the miners. In the past he has expressed these views very widely and spoken as the president of the Miners' Federation. The view has therefore got around that these views represent the opinions of the coal miners of this country. He has been called to account for this and hence we have the above-mentioned introductory remarks to his present presidential speech.

Smillie's current views upon the war are well expressed by the following extract from his speech: "The war might have been settled on two or three occasions during the past two years honorably and satisfactorily." He was "not in favor of ending the war merely by laying down tools,

but it might be ended by intelligence sitting round a table & on fair terms." In saying these words Smillie shows signs of having changed his tone somewhat and appears to have moderated some of his more striking negotiatory or Pacifist opinions in the past—or anyway their outward pronouncements, otherwise Smillie's speech dealt with miner's questions and was followed by a vote of thanks to him.

One delegate declined to be a party to all that Smillie had said and declared that the president had used the federation in such a way as to express through it his own opinions. There seemed signs of trouble resulting from this, but oil was poured upon the waters by Stephen Walsh, a miner and Labor Member of Parliament, who stated that unity was necessary because there was great trouble in store. During reconstruction after the war labor would have a tremendous, difficult and troublesome task to undertake. The convention then went into private session for the rest of the day on the question of permanent officials.

Over a hundred resolutions were down for discussion during the convention's week. The first one considered, demanded the nationalization of the coal mines, with joint control and administration by the workmen and the state. The resolution further instructed the executive committee immediately to draft a Parliamentary bill as a basis for the necessary legislation. The discussion upon this resolution was very good. It was pointed out that the trend of State control during the war had been towards purely bureaucratic administration. Producers must insist upon having some directive power within the limits of their own industry. In the coal industry the Miners' Federation should represent the producers' interests in the authority, both central and de-centralized, right down to each separate colliery. This would involve responsibility for management in every department of the industry, including even the work of exportation, banking and other departments of finance. The question was asked whether the miners were ready for this. It would be a big test of their educational attainments and they would have to face even the possibility of the industry not thriving under their control. The great thing to be avoided was a nationalization or socialization which did not carry out prominent working class control at the same time.

A number of other resolutions were adopted. One was for the nationalization of land. Amendments of the British Coal Mines Regulation Act were demanded, especially, amongst

other things, to make it compulsory upon colliery owners to provide baths at the pitheads for the miners, to lessen the danger to life by sinking an additional shaft wherever underground work extended a mile or more, and for a Government inspector on his visits to a colliery to be accompanied on his rounds by one of the local workmen's inspectors.

Under the old Workmen's Compensation Act in this country a certain level of compensation was paid to workmen who were disabled temporarily or permanently in the course of their employment. Since the war this compensation has been increased by 25 per cent. The miners in the present convention demanded an increase to 50 per cent, whilst it was further sought to make it compulsory for colliery owners to bear the cost of all artificial limbs, glass eyes, etc., that any workman might need through accidents received whilst following his employment. The question of a minimum wage was referred back to the executive committee. The miners' view of a minimum wage appears to be \$2.50 per day for the coal getter, with higher rates for other grades in proportion. At the present time there are minimum wages in this country for coal miners but they differ from district to district.

One of the most important resolutions at this convention was one for a six-hour working day. Separate resolutions had been sent up on this topic from half a dozen different important districts. The resolution which was considered to embody the aims of most of the members was one instructing the executive committee to take steps to immediately summon a special convention of the Miners' Federation on the six-hour working day question, to be followed by a special convention of the triple alliance of labor—the said triple alliance being, as my readers may remember, the miners' the transport workers and the railway workers. The definite object aimed at is that within four weeks after the declaration of peace the hours of all the workers concerned shall be not more than six per day.

A further resolution which did not obtain quite such unanimous support, but still was carried, was in favor of a five-day working week without any reduction of present weekly wages.

A later resolution was one of a more general character and demanded that British soldiers and sailors should be paid \$1.50 a day and that \$3.00 a week should be the minimum amount paid to dependents for one soldier or sailor. Many other resolutions of an important character were carried, but one of special importance remained till near the finish. It was decided that on any question of urgent national importance, or of any question already agreed to by a national conference of the miners, the executive committee or a special convention of the Miners' Federation might call the memb-

ers of the federation out on strike without a ballot vote if it were thought desirable. Hitherto no national strike of coal miners has been entered into officially without a ballot of all the members being taken first.

Western Labor News

### I.W.W MEMBERS CONVICTED.

After 4½ months of the most bitterly fought legal battle in the history of American Labor, the prosecution scored an initial victory in the trial of one hundred of our fellow workers in Chicago.

A masterly defense was provided by Attorney Geo. F. Vanderveer, assisted by Wm. B. Cleary of Arizona, Otto Christensen of Chicago, and Miss Caroline A. Lowe, of Seattle. It is not too much to say that everything seemed to point to an acquittal, even the charge to the jury by Judge Landis, who, we gladly admit, proved himself to be impartial in all respects. The verdict of "Guilty" came as a shock, a thunderbolt from a clear sky.

The jury was out fifty-five minutes. It may have been only a formality that they left their seats to go to the jury room. A Chicago paper states it is evident that only the ballot was taken.

Motion for a new trial will be filed immediately and if necessary, appeal will be taken. All defendants are now in Cook County Jail. A word of cheer from the Fellow Workers in the field will be appreciated by them.

Fellow Worker Haywood gave out the following:

"I have no fault to find with Judge Landis, and none of the rest of us have," said Haywood, at the County Jail. "He was fair to us, absolutely square throughout the whole trial. His instruct were fair I thought, and certainly he treated us excellently while the trial was in progress.

"Everything possible that could be done for us during the trial was done. This is shown by Judge Landis letting about seventy of us out of jail on our own recognisances. I am glad that none of us violated the confidence he reposed in us, but that all were on hand for the final day.

"I think if the jury had followed instructions there would have been a different story. I hope the next steps will be taken quickly. If our motion for a new trial is denied, we shall, of course, appeal.

"We are still good I.W.W., all of us. Everyone is still loyal to the Organization. We look upon our conviction a merely an incident in the History of the I.W.W. In reality we regard the Organization as only born yesterday, and are sure it will flourish. We're not for Germany, as they said we were. For me, I'd like to see the kaiser licked off the face of the globe."

One hundred of our Fellow Workers are thus temporarily barred from

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