

"Comparison of Wages by Districts Shows Union Miner holds Great Advantage"

The Federal Coal Commission, as a part of its report on the earnings of miners, compared the earnings of districts and states. The northern states east of the Mississippi include Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

The southern states east of the Mississippi include Alabama, Kentucky, Maryland, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. The states west of the Mississippi include Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

In the survey of the mines within these groups there were 1,177 union mines and 751 non-union mines as in operation in 1921. From data obtainable from these operations the commission made its comparisons of earnings.

The commission took up the work of the tonnage men first. The percentage of mines with a small number of starts irregularly distributed throughout the year, accounts in part for the relatively large number of names appearing on the pay roll during the year. For the sixty-seven Indiana mines, 13,552 tonnage men were reported, of whom 540 were machine miners, 7,401 pick miners, 4,535 loaders and 75 worked in two tonnage occupations. The average number of tonnage men employed was 8,655.

Machine miners with 148 starts earned \$1,500 to \$1,600. In the same earnings interval pick men made 186 and loaders 179 starts. Locating average earnings approximately by the average number of starts made by tonnage men—130—we find machine miners making \$1,400 to \$1,500 in 138 starts, pick miners \$1,000 to \$1,100 in 142, and loaders the same earnings in 132 starts. The full year tonnage men had a higher average, since the median is \$1,550, with 25 per cent of the miners earning more than \$1,850.

In Illinois the most regular operation was by mines in the northern area. However, the difference in days did not counteract the difficult mining conditions, and earnings for the year were lower in Northern Illinois than in any other of the areas.

A table is given to assist in comparing the earnings of full time tonnage men in Illinois and Indiana. Southern Illinois shows the highest earnings for the group in 1921. However, the curves of Central Illinois and Indiana follow it closely. The upper 30 per cent of the men in the Belleville district also follow the trend of the other districts. The other 70 per cent, however, fall in comparatively lower earnings groups. For example, 40 per cent in the Belleville district earned but \$1,200 while the same proportion of men were earning between \$1,400 to \$1,500 in the other districts.

Figures show eight mines in Michigan employing an average of 1,083 men. The concentration in numbers of tonnage men in this state is found in earnings between \$1,800 and \$2,000 for an average of about 227 starts. Loaders made \$1,800 to \$1,900 in an average of 226 starts.

The Panhandle area in Ohio had an unusually good year of operation. The average starts for the 42 mines discussed for earnings were 193. The absenteeism of tonnage men was 13 per cent, leaving an average of 167 starts per man. For this working time machine miners secured \$1,700 to \$1,800, pick miners \$1,600 to \$1,700 and loaders \$1,200 to \$1,300.

In Northern Ohio, the 30 mines tabulated average 163 starts with working time for tonnage men 151 starts. Machine miners in the normal working time for the year earned \$1,600 to \$1,800. Loaders made \$1,200 to \$1,300 in a slightly longer period.

The Hocking field had a poor year with very irregular operation in 1921, the report says. The 108 starts shown by the 41 mines in this compilation is far below the average of all mines in the United States. Tonnage men worked less than 100 days. We must, therefore, regard the earnings opportunity afforded as less than 1-3 of a full-time working year. Machine miners' earnings for the average starts range from \$900-\$1,200, pick miners slightly over \$1,000 and loaders \$700-\$800.

The various groups of states or districts were taken up separately, the commission and the earnings of each group studied. The report says:

"In order to secure a comparable basis for stating earnings by the various fields discussed in the major sub-divisions of this report, the time worked to make \$1,000 has been selected and areas compared on the basis of this unit. It must not be assumed that the \$1,000 to \$1,100 interval in the normal earnings for any area for the year. There is no presumption in the selection as to whether earnings for a given field were higher or lower than this unit or not.

In the central competitive field there is a range in number of starts worked by loaders of 130-169 to earn \$1,000 to \$1,100 in the different districts. Four of the areas, Indiana, Michigan, and two Ohio districts fall in the 130-139 start period; the Panhandle, Ohio, and Northwestern Pittsburgh in the 140-149. All parts of the central competitive field have a fairly uniform distribution of time within a period of twenty starts. Southern Ohio with a working time of 160-169 is also an exception. Central Pennsylvania is ten starts above the competitive field with no difference in working time in union and non-union mines. Other non-union areas in Pennsylvania have thirty starts more working time than the central competitive field, with the exception of Somerset, which is within the 20 start range of the latter. The \$200 group shows no significant shift in the relation of areas.

The central competitive field from 140-160, Central Pennsylvania between 170-180, and the non-union fields of Pennsylvania occur in the same order as in the \$1,000 interval already discussed.

Pick miners earning \$1,000 fall within the 120-150 range of days in the central competitive field. Central Pennsylvania worked 150-160 starts. The non-union areas of Pennsylvania bear the same relationship to each other and to the other districts for loaders as for pick miners, the upper limit of the central competitive field and the Westmoreland and Connellsville being two and three intervals higher.

In the southern union field pick miners earned \$1,000 in 130-150 starts in all districts except Fairmont, which is 10 starts higher. Harlan and Maryland, which are 20 starts higher, and

Alabama, 30 higher. To make \$1,200 time worked in all districts ranged between 150-170 starts except in Piedmont, which was 10 starts lower, Alabama and Maryland 10 and 20 starts higher. Loaders for the same area range from 130-150 starts for \$1,000, except Virginia, and Fairmont, which are each 10 starts higher and Alabama and Tennessee, which are considerably higher. Men in the same occupation in five areas earned \$1,200 in range of 10 starts, (150-160); in 3 others between 170-180. Four areas have a higher average with the Alabama being highest in the whole southeast field.

"In the union parts of the southeastern fields, pick miners to make \$1,000 worked 140-150 starts except Fairmont, which had ten starts less and Kanawha and New River, 20 each less. It should be noted that these two fields fall ten starts below any other field in the southern area. There is no change in the relative position of the fields in the \$1,200 interval. The averages for three districts are located between 150-160, with Kanawha and New River 10 and 20 starts lower. Time for loaders in the same area in three of the fields was between 130 and 150 for \$1,000 earned, with New River 120-130. The \$1,200 interval, ranges from 160-169, with New River, Panhandle, and Tennessee 10-20 starts lower."

West of the Mississippi, pick miners in most of the districts made between 130-150 starts to earn \$1,000-\$1,100. Montana ranged ten starts lower, Arkansas and Wyoming were 30 starts lower. The only state west of the Mississippi above 250 starts (?) is Missouri. The \$1,200 interval shows the same relationship between states in distribution of starts.

Loaders earning \$1,000-\$1,100 worked 130-150 starts in all states with two exceptions: Arkansas was 20 and Wyoming 30 starts lower than the lower limit.

In the central competitive field and Central Pennsylvania, the report shows, the time required for day men to secure \$1,000-\$1,100 is fairly uniform when one takes into account the differences in the major occupations compared. Blacksmiths are equally divided between the 130-140 and 140-150 day periods, five fields working in each class. There are two fields with carpenters working 150 days. Brakemen are located in the two intervals considered, as are drivers. Motormen in one area fall below 130 days. Timbermen are mainly in the 140-150 period with two fields as low as 130 and one at 160 days. Seven areas have 140 days for trackmen, four 130, and one 160. Considering all outside occupations, workmen earning \$1,000-\$1,100 in five areas occur in the 140 interval of days, five in the 150, and two in the 160. Inside men work about 10 days less in nine out of the twelve areas. When all the inside occupations are averaged, nine fields work 140 days, one 10 days less and two others ten days more. Summarizing, it will be seen that there is a range of about twenty days in time worked for both inside and outside men, with a concentration about the 140-150 period.

For the north-east union field, the concentration is in a wholly different interval and tends to be about thirty eight-hour days higher for the same earnings. Detailed consideration would show also a greater deviation above and below the 180 interval where the concentration occurs, than was noted for the unionized fields of the central competitive area. The northeast union field has about an equal distribution in the 140-150 and 150-160 days range with seven cases where some one of the occupations is above 100 days. The tendency is for inside men to make \$1,000-\$1,100 within a spread of ten days, mostly concentrated in the 140-150 interval. Only three exceptions are found to this. Outside men are about evenly divided between 140 and 150 days with a skew towards the 150 group.

Passing to the non-union areas in the southeast, a strikingly different picture is presented. A greater scatter is apparent, with a massing from 140 to 190. The variation in time worked is phenomenal and there is a spread in days found in no other area. In Alabama, blacksmiths, drivers and trackmen, as well as carpenters, brakemen and motormen, work more days than in any other state.

Because of the more regular operation west of the Mississippi the earnings of skilled occupations tend to be concentrated in the higher earnings interval. The \$1,200-\$1,300 interval is therefore used as a unit for comparing working time among occupations in these fields. It is interesting to note that the time worked tends to arrange itself about the 160-170 unit. The massing is about equal in each of the ten day limits above and below this unit.

Perhaps the most concrete way to state the differences in earnings opportunity west of the Mississippi, is to point to the fact that for \$200 more in earnings, the days worked are 20 less than in the Southeast and Northeast non-union fields. Compared with the central competitive field, this means that 20 days more were worked to secure the extra \$100, or about the same working time as the central competitive field shows for \$1,200. No further detailed comparison is made of the separate occupations, since the earnings of a full year day men were discussed in Chapter IV, of Part I. The variations can best be understood by consulting the tables accompanying this report which are presented for every region considered.

The report says in its conclusion: "Since the main purpose was to find out how much opportunity for earnings the industry afforded in a year better than 1921 than either the northeast union or non-union. Ten per cent earnings of full year men.

The same geographical grouping has been followed as in 1921. However, owing to the paucity of data, areas instead of the major coal fields have been totalled.

Taking the northeast union territory, ten per cent earned \$1,380 or less in 1920, while 10 per cent earned \$1,760 or less in 1921. Thirty per cent earned \$1,760 or less in 1920, as against \$1,150 in 1921.

"The southeast union division was lower in both 1920 and 1921. The non-union groups in the southeast, do not follow the trend of the men fall at or below \$1,350, 30 per cent at or below \$1,653 in 1920. One-half were above \$1,870, with one-quarter above \$2,195. 1921, for this division, was about \$600 lower for 70 per cent of the men. The difference was three to four hundred for the upper 30 per cent.

The non-union groups in the southeast do not follow the general conclusions drawn for the extensive study for 1921 concerning earnings in union and non-union areas, since earnings are more than \$100 higher in the non-union than in the union areas of the southeast. This is probably due to the small representation for Alabama, Tennessee and Virginia fields, where earnings range lower than in West Virginia and in Maryland, which are most fully represented. When 1921 is compared with 1920 for this non-union sub-division, there is found to be a difference of only \$200 to \$300 in the annual earnings of the two years. One-half of the men in 1920 earned more than \$1,730, with one-half in 1921 earning more than \$1,375.

"West of the Mississippi annual earnings range higher in union and non-union sub-divisions than in any eastern field. This is equally true whether one considers 1920 or 1921, assuming always that comparison is being made for the same year. There was very little difference in the union and non-union groups for 1920. In 1921, the union groups were higher than the non-union by a difference of \$200 to \$500. In 1921, 70 per cent of the men earned more than \$2,000, 30 per cent more than \$2,660 in both union and non-union divisions.

"IT MUST COME SOMETHING MUST HAPPEN"

FRAGMENTS OF A PEOPLE'S LIFE.

Though the General Election has turned our attention from Europe for the moment, the problem remains. These little sketches show that the German people have been sinking deeper and deeper into the slough of despond.

At Moabit.
The night is cold and rainy. A strong wind penetrates one's overcoat and sends shivers through the body. The street stretching down to the Town Hall of Old Moabit is dark and unfriendly. One would like to be near the cosy and warm fire of an English drawing room. But here I am outdoors somewhere in Berlin, somewhere in Germany, a poignant feeling keeping body and soul in its clutches.

Before the high gates of the Town Hall I see a black throng of people, hundreds, maybe thousands. I am amongst them, one of them. The sound of innumerable voices rings in my ears, the key-note of which is a compound of dullness, anger, hope, and desperation....What are they doing here at this late hour?...The door of the building opens at intervals and each time a bundle of men and women are allowed to enter....
"....We are getting our dose," explains a middle-aged poorly-dressed, but clean-looking fellow to me. See all these people here, they wait for hours they wait the whole night until the morning to get huge amount of 20 millions each.

He laughed bitterly.
"Cursed enormous-sounding amount! It buys—do you know it buys! He clutches a button of my coat. "Just half-a-pound of margarine or just one loaf of bread, for which, if you want to get it, you have to fight before the bakers shop. What seemed to be a something in the beginning of the week is now a bare nothing. Take these twenty-millions of marks into your hand and blow on them...they are gone. Children have to eat of that, must live on that."

He raises his fist and all of them men and women, telling each other the old tale of misery, they raise their fists; they get those sparkling eyes of restless agony which threatens danger and the subdued voices mutter through clenched teeth the words "It must come, something must happen."
In the train from Berlin to Leipzig on my right a well-dressed gentleman with the so-called "shimmy" boots and fur coat. His well-fed face looks very self-possessed and content. On my left an elderly and rather poorly-dressed man with a kind, yet furtive expression. Opposite, a fat woman and well clad lady with piles of parcels.

It is a cold and chilly morning; one winder is open. I feel rather cold and more so probably does the gentleman on my left, because he rises to close it.
"Oh, no, I beg you," shouts the fellow on the right, "let the fresh air enter; I don't think you look old enough to feel the cold already."
A forced smile appears on the face and back he drops into his seat, shivering. The gentleman on my right takes out his wallet and I see a pile of real five and ten-dollar notes in there; then he makes some calculations in his note book. The fat lady opposite opens one of her parcels, and starts in an old German-like manner a second breakfast, which consists of many rare foodstuffs which I have not seen nor had for weeks. For half an hour she smacks her lips.

Her conversation with the fur-coated gentleman reveals that she is the wife of a well-to-do farmer. The gentleman is a timber merchant who sells his goods for dollars only, and who is well provided with all desired worldly goods. His workmen, of course, he pays with silver paper marks but they can manage to exist.
The fellow on my left smiles wearily and he mutters: "It must come something must happen!"
At the Market Hall of a working-class district of Berlin: At all the entrances and scattered here and there, are green-clothed policemen; the merchants must be protected against possible riots and looting.
I approach the stand of a potato dealer. Twelve milliard marks is the price for ten pounds. The people are greatly agitated. The last only in the queue seem to be depressed because it is possible that when their turn comes there are no more potatoes left. What will happen then? Tomorrow the vegetable may be twice as expensive, and incomes are not increased within twenty-four hours.
"I can't buy any more bread," a woman is declaring, "as it is too expensive. And, oh, God, tomorrow it will be double." I have just enough money left for a few potatoes. But this is only one thing, and I can't buy anything else. Where is this all going to lead us to?"
At a grocer's stall there is a sudden rush. "What, yells a robust woman, "just an hour ago you asked twenty milliard for an egg, and now you want forty. That's sheer robbery, that's filthy profiteering. Don't stand by that, come on people; give it to him, drag his show down."
There is a general outbreak and uproar, and immediately dozens of hands are thrust out to the well laden shelves. At this moment the police come to the rescue of the howling stall-holder. "Oh, yes. Of course, the 'greens'!"
The crowd disperses, but Mrs. A. murmurs to Mrs. B. "Our men can't earn enough for the daily bread. Something must happen; it must come."

FRANCE SEEKS SUGAR WORKERS
Representatives of the French sugar industry are said to have visited Prague for the purpose of engaging 2,000 Czechoslovak workers for the French sugar factories and refineries. It is reported that the Central Labor Bureau of Prague will raise no objection to the migration of these workmen.

LABOR EXODUS TO EUROPE.
Algerian labor reports now a large exodus of Arabs and Kabyles to

OUR OVERSEAS COLUMN

NEW ACT NEEDED TO DEAL WITH RENTS

Lower Rents Called For: Confusion in the Courts: Advice to Tenants.

By J. SILAS WHYBREW
Hardships are being created under the latest Rent Restrictions Act, and new legislation is called for in the following article.

Mr. Whybrew demands the removal of certain anomalies, and also argues that rents must be reduced. In view of the possibility of a new Rents Committee being set up, it is important that the information Mr. Whybrew asks for should be supplied promptly.

Judges in a Muddle.
The Rent and Mortgage Interest Restrictions Act, which became law as from July 31 last, is playing widespread havoc with the domestic affairs of thousands of tenants.

It may rightly be regarded as the most mischievous piece of legislation that the late Government was guilty of perpetrating.

At the present moment, in all parts of the country, whole families are living in dread of the day when they are due to leave their homes in consequence of the orders for possession made in favor of the landlord.

The Act enables an owner to obtain possession without offering other accommodation or proving the existence of any sort of available accommodation.

The Rent Acts were admittedly passed owing to the lack of small houses in every district. In face of this, to make it possible for people, old and young, to be evicted from their habitations without any shadow of evidence that another roof is available, is against the elementary claims of decency and humanity.

Bias in the Courts.
Of course, it is provided that the judge shall decide if an application for possession is "reasonable," but from what viewpoint?

Many judges are obsessed with the "reasonableness" of "the rights of property," and consider that because a person has bought a house over the head of a tenant he is entitled to possession, quite regardless of the effect on the present occupants.

That explains the enormous number of "orders for possession" made, not only by judges, but magistrates as well.
Surely the one meaning of "reasonableness" for the purpose of the operation of the Rent Act should be that some kind of accommodation is available in the locality, within the means of the parties affected.

There is need for an investigation into the methods of the County Courts in relation to the Rent Acts, both as regards the conduct and ruling of judges and those of registrars. The investigation would probably point to the need of setting up House and Rent Courts.

Meanwhile, the advice I would offer to every tenant who has had an order for possession made against him, if he has been unable to obtain other accommodation, is to apply to the Court for a further extension.

What is the Law?
Not only is there a property bias but numerous conflicting rulings make it imperative that there should be a revision of the law.

Cases have arisen which make it necessary that "actual possession" should be clearly defined.
Both the "Licensing Journal" and a recently published work on the Rent Acts, 1920 and 1923, as applicable to Scotland, held the view that the words mean that the landlord must be living in the house with the intention of continuing to use it as his home.

Other legal experts are not so definite in their interpretation of Section 2 subsection (3) of the Act. Nevertheless tenants who have recently taken on houses and rooms at large increases of rent in excess of the amount allowed by the 1920-23 Acts should accept what the above-named publications state, until the contrary is proved.

The point recently raised by Sheriff Menzies—that a notice, to be legal, must be signed by the landlord or give his name and address—must be settled.

The book on the Rent Acts referred to above—which secretaries of tenants' organizations in Scotland will find a very useful work of refer-

ence—takes the view that the notice is good if it gives the name of the factor for proprietor.

Lower the Rents.
The permitted increase of rent must be reduced.

When the provisions of the Rent Acts were under review by the Onslow Committee of inquiry, evidence was submitted by the National Labor Housing Association and Federation of Tenants' Leagues that, as wages had been substantially lowered, the increases in rent permitted under the 1920 Rent Act should be reduced.

This view was pressed on the floor of the House of Commons in the stages of the original Bill by Labor M.P.'s.

Wages are on a lower scale than six months ago. A reduction of the present 40 per cent, and 50 per cent, allowed under the 1923 Act should be considered.

It is quite evident, also, that while local authorities are dominated by landlords and house agents and their mutual friends it is impossible to obtain the certificate to prove that the premises are unfit for human habitation, so that the increase of rent can be suspended.

Such councillors are ignoring the reports of their medical officers of health and the sanitary inspectors, whether action is taken under the provisions of the Rent Acts or Public Health Acts.

At present the only course open appeared to be to take the local authorities to the High Court to urge that a writ should be issued directing them to discharge their duties.

The Act might be amended so that the possession of the certificate is not essential, providing that other evidence is submitted as proof of defect.

New Inquiry?
Whatever new measures the new House of Commons may be called upon to discuss, the whole of the working class in the United Kingdom will readily endorse the immediate consideration of a further Amending Bill dealing with various clauses in the present Act, which bear harshly on tenants and tend to maintain 'Leit standard of living on a lower level than would otherwise be the case.

As, no doubt, fresh evidence will be required if the whole question of the operation of the Rent Acts is to be thoroughly overhauled—and by a more representative committee than previous committees have been—shall be glad if all tenants and secretaries of tenants' organizations will send me (at 136 Hampstead-way, London, N.W.11), particulars of cases that should be presented and press cuttings of Court proceedings.

WHAT THE MINERS ASKED

Higher Minimum Wage and More of the Surplus.

The demands made by the miners are—

- (1) An increase in the minimum wage from 20 per cent to 40 per cent above the standard rates.
- (2) A greater percentage of the proceeds of the industry to be credited to wages under the profit-sharing clause.
- (3) Fuller information as to what is charged against the industry as "other cost." The miners believe that certain charges which are now debited to revenue account are really capital charges.

These demands have been before the owners for several months.

At the owners' suggestion a joint sub-committee was set up to give exhaustive consideration to the proposals.

That committee met on Wednesday and Thursday of this week.

Owners' Replies.

The outcome of these negotiations is understood, as follows:

1. Minimum Wage.—The owners refuse to agree to any increase.
2. Division of Surplus.—The owners could not agree that profits should take 13 per cent (instead of 17 per cent as now) of any divisible surplus.
3. Other costs.—The owners said they would see whether it was practicable to give the information asked for.

A large proportion of the miners are now on or about the minimum. Continued on page 4.