

in the mining districts throughout England, Scotland and Wales as to whether there shall be a general stoppage in the event of the Scottish coal owners persisting in giving notices to their workmen, was held in London on July 28th.

So overwhelming has been the vote for a general stoppage in support of the Scottish miners that the preventing of a strike at practically all the coal mines of Great Britain depends now upon the success of the Board of Trade negotiations for a settlement.

Opinion on that critical point is divided, though the best opinion in the Federation is that a settlement will be effected without a stoppage. It may be stated that the Scottish delegates are not so optimistic as their English colleagues as to the prospect of an immediate settlement. In the opinion of Mr. Smillie, the President of the Scottish Miners' Federation, the outlook is very bad, but this pessimistic view of the situation is not shared by others who have taken part in the joint conferences. There is a reasonable prospect of a settlement. Mr. Askwith, K.C., who presided at the second meeting of the Board of Trade on Friday and at Glasgow on Tuesday, has proved a skilful mediator, smoothing away points of difference and suggesting points of concession and agreement.

The conference began its sitting at two o'clock, and the proceedings lasted for less than an hour and a half. Mr. W. Abraham, M.P., South Wales, presided in the absence through illness of Mr. E. Edwards, and there were present 130 delegates.

The proceedings were private, but at the adjournment Mr. A. Stanley, M.P., presented the following official report:

"The conference is called specially to receive the result of the ballot taken of the members upon the question whether or not the whole of the Federation shall put into operation the twentieth rule and declare a general stoppage in sympathy with the Scottish miners in their determination to resist a demand of the Scottish coal owners for 12½ per cent. reduction in wages. The result showed that 518,361 had voted for a general stoppage and 62,980 against, giving a clear majority for a stoppage of 455,381."

The deputation who had been appointed by the Federation to assist in the negotiations before the Board of Trade and also with the Scottish coal owners on the matter gave a report of these transactions, and the following resolutions were carried unanimously:

"That unless a satisfactory settlement be arrived at tomorrow with regard to the Scottish dispute, notices be given in all districts to terminate contracts to end on the last day of August.

"That in view of the ballot of the Federation being so strongly in favour of a general stoppage, financial support equal to 10s. per week be paid to the Scottish miners during their preliminary stoppage, and that the carrying out of this resolution be delegated to the Executive Council."

The thickest seam of coal proved in Kent was discovered on July 23rd in one of the borings between Canterbury and Dover at a depth of only 1,459 feet from the surface. The seam proved to be 5 feet 9 inches in thickness, some fine samples of clean, bright coal being brought up in the large core barrel. This is the fourth seam discovered in the same boring.

UNITED STATES.

On coal the duty has been decreased from 67 cents a ton to 45 cents. Last year from the Maritime Provinces and British Columbia mines there was shipped to the New England and Pacific States markets coal to the value of \$4,041,562. The reduction of the duty on coal is one of the most important features of the new tariff from the Canadian standpoint. The placing of hides on the free list is also likely to be of material benefit to Canadian exporters. Last year Canada exported to the States hides to the value of \$1,308,551.

The reduction in the duty on agricultural implements from 20 per cent. to 15 per cent. is hardly likely to have any effect on

Canada. The American market can be controlled by the American manufacturers in any event. Last year our exports of agricultural implements to the States amounted to only \$15,459.

MEXICO.

A gigantic steel plant will be established in Mexico City within the coming year by French and American capital. The initial outlay will be \$50,000,000.

Victor Belanger, of Paris, is the head of the concern. It is understood that a part of the capital will come from Paris and Boston. Coal and iron mines in Buffalo will be acquired later by the company. The steel will be manufactured by a new and secret process.

SOUTH AFRICA.

The directors of the City Deep, Ltd., have offered a handsome bonus to the Victoria Falls and Transvaal Power Company, Ltd., to supply power this month, thus accelerating production by some three months ahead of what has been anticipated.

According to official returns, the value of the mineral output of the Transvaal for the half year which ended on 30th June last was £16,723,785, of which gold represented £15,472,409, and diamonds £580,807. The total decrease, as compared with the previous half year, was £114,010, of which gold accounted for £57,403 and diamonds for £133,682. Coal and other minerals showed an increase of £79,348, while silver decreased by £2,268.

AUSTRALIA.

The value of the mineral exports from New South Wales for the half year ended 30th June was as follows: Silver, £86,199; silver-lead concentrates, £480,575; lead matte, £91,679; copper, £296,750; tin, £142,049; coal, £1,193,042.

The discovery of rich gold-bearing ore at Ballarat has been officially reported to the Government. The strike runs in a northerly direction, almost under the centre of the city. The fact that most of the operations have hitherto been carried on in a southerly direction enhances the importance of the discovery.

Company Notes.

The Coniagas, which passed its last dividend, as a matter of policy rather than necessity, has paid the following dividends since its inception:—

Date.	P.C.	Bonus.	
1907—May 1	2		\$80,000
June 1		1	40,000
July 1	2		80,000
September 1	2		80,000
November 1	2		80,000
1908—January 1	2		80,000
March 1	2		80,000
May 1	2		80,000
July 1	2		80,000
November 1	3		120,000
1909—February 1	3		120,000
May 1	3		120,000
Total	25	1	\$1,040,000

The Kerr Lake dividend for the third quarter of 1909, announced at 30c per share, brings the total disbursements of that mine up to a total of \$1,320,000, or 38 per cent. on a total capitalization authorized and issued of \$3,000,000. The par value of the shares is \$5.