

ILLINOIS STRIKE SITUATION.

Illinois coal operators were again in session at Chicago on Monday, this week. In regard to the extent of the mine idleness there was particularly no change last week. The operators are not only standing firm, but seem to be showing greater determination than ever to continue their present attitude and to adequately meet the more hostile determination of the miners. Same lawlessness was reported last week, the marching of men from one mine to another to pull out the pumpmen and engineers. Committees of the miners even requested the pit bosses and the mine superintendents, who in the emergency had taken charge of the machinery, to join in their ranks. To prevent interference with the operation of the mine machinery, injunctions were obtained and served in many of the districts last week enjoining the striking miners from trespassing upon mine property and from committing depredations.

Another development, which is significant, is a movement among the stationary engineers at mines to secede from the U. M. W. and reorganize their own brotherhood. It will be remembered they had their own organization a few years ago, but at the solicitation of John Mitchell and other labor leaders, went over in a body into the larger organization. The evil of that amalgamation from an operator's standpoint has just been forcefully shown. In order to keep their mines in good condition several of the Illinois operators were compelled last week to send stationary engineers to the mines to man the posts abandoned by the former engineers. The engineers last week held meetings in various districts and the proposition to organize a separate association may take definite form this week.

The relations between the operators and the miners of Illinois at the beginning of the week are distinctly more strained than a week earlier. Current incidents reveal on the part of the misguided leaders of miners the mistaken policy of violence and faithlessness to obligation, and the outbreaks seem to be drawing the operators closer together in a policy of self protection.

In the Southwest the strike continues without apparent change.—Coal Trade Journal

VERDICT IN THE CHERRY MINE DISASTER.

The coroner's jury which began last November to investigate the cause of the Cherry mine disaster, which resulted in the death of 265 miners in the St. Paul mine, has reached an agreement, and 250 separate verdicts have been returned. The jury says the mining laws were broken with the knowledge and consent of the mine inspectors.

The verdicts were in three sets, one set fixing the cause of the death of the 12 men in the rescue party who perished on the cage in the mine shaft; another set for the 187 men who were suffocated in the second seam; the third set is for the 51 men who were trapped in the seam and died of exposure and suffocation. The verdict of the coroner's jury vindicates John Cowley, the engineer who was in charge of the cage. The verdict blames "a confusion of signals" for the tragedy.

The following verdict was brought in for each of the 187 men who lost their lives in the second seam:

"We find that they came to death by suffocation and that the fire was caused by a load of baled hay coming in contact with an oil torch. And we further find that there was great delay in notifying the men of their danger."

The verdict giving the cause of the death of the men in the third seam says:

We find that they came to their death by exposure and suffocation. We further find that the mining laws of the State of Illinois in relation to means of escape were violated with the full knowledge and consent of the mine inspectors for district No. 2."

Although the operators thought they had reached a settlement with the miners of the eastern Ohio district some time ago, when the delegates agreed upon all points and drew up a contract to be presented to the men for their approval, President Lewis went to Wheeling the next day and overthrew the whole arrangement. As a result, the representatives of the operators were called back to that city on Monday of last week and told that they would have to make further concessions before the matter would be considered. This the operators flatly refused to do. Two days were spent in arguing the question, but the delegates failed to move the operators in the least.

Finally the operators asserted that they were willing to leave the contract to the men themselves and abide by their decision as to whether it should stand. On Thursday it was put to a referendum vote and won out by a large majority. Many of the locals voted almost solidly for the settlement, while others were divided. Both delegates and operators worked among the men, explaining the settlement. This is another pretty hard jolt for Pres. Lewis and his friends. His election was opposed in eastern Ohio and it is the belief of the operators that he interfered with the settlement in order to even matters somewhat with both the miners and operators. After he had accomplished his errand at Wheeling he left the city and the operators did not have an opportunity to talk with him.—Coal Trade Journal

SOMETHING FOR INSURANCE.

The Troy 'Times' says: 'Colliery disasters are costly affairs. Judgments against the Cherry company amounting to not less than 400,000 have been secured. Economy no less than humanity suggests the advisability of adopting effective means of preventing such catastrophes.'

But nothing is said about how these are to be avoided, for some of the very worst accidents have occurred in mines equipped with every known modern device for preventing them. With a business so dangerous, an outsider would think that there ought to be some kind of a self-insurance laid up, by charging a little in excess of the actual amount necessary to take coal out of the ground, but too often we find that useless competition is responsible for prices too low even to be profitable, or with a percentage of gain below that of even ordinary commerce.