

# EDITORIAL

## Nationalization of Mines

The King's Speech at the opening of the Houses of Parliament in London recently forecasted legislation for the acquirement by the State of the coal royalties in Britain, designed to settle the questions affecting the coal industry on "an enduring basis." Mr. Wm. Brace, representing the Miners' Federation, moved an amendment to the reply to the speech from the Throne regretting "the absence of any proposal to nationalize the coal mines of the country along the lines recommended by the majority of the members of the Royal Commission on the Coal Industry." Mr. Lloyd George, in the discussion which followed Mr. Brace's motion definitely aligned himself and his associates against nationalization of coal mines as understood by Br. Brace, and with the genius to epitomize a situation which marks this distinguished tribune of the people, said it was impossible to have nationalization without bureaucracy. Herein we believe Mr. Lloyd George has summed up the main objections to nationalization, and to a freedom loving nation that has so long submitted to the whims of "Dora" the mere mention of bureaucracy is nauseating.

The miners' leaders have not as yet given any satisfactory reason for their advocacy of nationalization of the coal industry, and the only thing that stands out with any clearness from their arguments is their determination not to work for private profit. As to this the miners' leaders are very frank, and their point of view is understandable, being, in fact, nothing more than the ancient human failing of envy. There is no academic reason favouring the nationalization of the coal mines that is not equally applicable to every other industry in which private profit constitutes the spur and original incentive, and in what branch of human endeavour is not personal betterment the compelling power?

The British people is not in the mood to allow itself to be mulcted for the preferential treatment of one class of men, whose strength consists in their employment in the production of an essential article, but not in any intrinsic personal merit or deserving claim to be more favored than other men. During the railway strike in Britain last summer, the country discovered that in a good many respects railway transportation was unsuited to British conditions, and that a combination of short distances, good highways and motor-lorries provided a system of transportation that was found upon trial to have superseded railway transport of such com-

modities as fish, milk and vegetables. As a result of this strike, the railwaymen found the importance of their occupation was diminished, and the country breathed more easily when it found itself emancipated from the demands of men who took an undue advantage of the necessary and specialized character of their employment.

It is probable that if the miners strike in order to compel Parliament to enact a nationalization law for coal mines that similar disillusionment awaits them and their leaders, by reason of the essential unfairness of their policy, which, baldly expressed, is that because the miners are strongly organized and produce a commodity that is the life-blood of Britain's internal industry and her export and shipping trades, then the miners must be given preferential treatment. No matter how disguised the proposals of the miners' leaders may be by their presentation, they will be found when stripped of their verbiage to be based upon envy and greed.

### EN PASSANT.

There is scarcely a week that the newspapers do not contain the announcement of the destruction by fire of some factory, some historic building, church or school, and altogether too often it is stated "the loss is only partly covered by insurance." This matter has been previously mentioned in the "Journal," but since that date, construction costs have gone further upwards. A revision of insurance schedules by the average mining company will reveal a serious divergence between the amount of insurance cover and the actual cost of replacement today. The next thing that we shall hear about will not only be still higher building costs, but increased insurance premiums, and there is no time better than the present to put insurance schedules in order.

The past few months have been marked by an unusual number of earth tremors, one series, of unusual duration, being felt with alarming severity near Nanaimo, Vancouver Island. So far as can be gathered, however, no effect of this tremor was experienced underground in the coal mines of that district. According to Mr. Napier Denison, of the meteorological observatory at Victoria, V.I., the shock was the worst tremor recorded in that vicinity.

Previous records of earthquakes have tended to show