

STEEL PRODUCTION 450,000 TONS A WEEK; STRIKE PRACTICALLY ENDED

Rate in New York to be Determined by New Standards — New Record of 700,000 Tons a Week Expected—Enormous Supply Predicted.

(Special Correspondence of the Evening Post.)

Pittsburgh, Dec. 16.—The iron and steel strike, as a strike, is now practically over, and the gains and losses can be counted up. The losses are three—a loss in tonnage output, a loss in high cost of the material that has been produced, and a loss in the injured morale and lower efficiency of working forces that will remain for some time to come, disappearing probably in about two or three months.

The strike began Monday, Sept. 22. Eleven weeks later, Dec. 8, the coal strike, which had been in progress for five weeks, became the dominant factor in restricting iron and steel production. During the eleven weeks the iron and steel strike had almost played out, there being few strikers left except in the Wheeling district, which produces about one-twentieth of the iron and steel of the country, and the Wheeling strikers now show a willingness to return to work when coal conditions permit.

Production of steel is frequently referred to in terms of steel ingots, but ingots are not a merchantable commodity, and a better measure is the production of finished rolled steel, which year after year runs at about 70 per cent of the known tonnage, there being regular losses in rolling and finishing, chiefly by way of scrap which goes through the steel-making process again. Just before the strike the production of finished rolled steel in the form of plates, structural shapes, rails, sheets, wire rods, etc., was at the rate of about 600,000 gross tons a week.

A few days after the strike started production was down to about 800,000 tons a week. The east and south were running practically normal, while the Wheeling district, the Mahoning Valley, centering in Youngstown, and the Cleveland district were closed tight and other regions were running at greater or less rates. In the last of the eleven weeks of strike here considered production was about 450,000 tons.

Were Prepared for Crisis.

Production during the entire eleven weeks may be estimated at about 4,000,000 tons, whereas a continuance of the pre-strike rate would have meant 6,600,000 tons. There was a curtailment of about 2,600,000 tons, but there was not necessarily a deficit as large as that. By many producers and consumers the strike had been expected, and some observers had expected a greater strike than occurred. An effort was made to accumulate stocks. How successful that effort was cannot be estimated closely, but some suggestion is furnished by the fact that steel did not become particularly scarce in the early weeks of the strike, when production was especially light, while it did become very scarce later, when production had increased.

Perhaps it is fair to guess that of the pre-strike production of 600,000 tons a week 10 per cent was going into stocks, which would set the consumption rate at 540,000 tons a week, whereby the actual requirements in the eleven weeks would have been about 6,000,000 tons. The 2,600,000 tons difference between requirements and production would be made up of three items, namely, consumption of extra stocks accumulated in anticipation, reduction of stocks below a convenient working level, and actual restriction in consumption. The last-named item was relatively small. The second was important and gives promise of there being even greater pressure upon the mills for deliveries after Jan. 1, the regular inventory date, than there is at present.

Points to Pig Iron Advance.

The foregoing figures, while stated precisely, must, of course, be taken merely as estimates, based upon numerous bits of evidence pieced together. A few words may be devoted to the claims made by strike leaders, Foster, Fitzpatrick, et al., that reports as to steel being produced are all lies, that there is merely a conspiracy for misrepresenting the facts.

Steel is made from pig iron, and pig iron is made with coke. About 80 per cent of the pig iron produced is used in making steel, the remaining 20 per cent being consumed by iron foundries and a few miscellaneous users, while of the coke produced about 80 per cent is used by blast furnaces making pig iron, the balance being used by foundries, by producers of non-ferrous metals, and for heating and miscellaneous purposes.

The Iron Age reports month by month the production of pig iron, and pig iron was not used in making steel during the strike period it would have become a drug on the market. Instead, it has advanced in the open market more than 30 per cent since Sept. 22, the date of the strike.

If the Iron Age blast furnace report, with all its details, be called a conspiracy, there is the geological survey, which makes a weekly report of beehive coke production. While the survey does not report by-product coke production, it has noted an increase in beehive coke production due to curtailed by-product coke production caused by the coal strike. The Iron Age and geological survey reports would not furnish material for as close estimates of steel production as have just been made, but if these estimates were far out the reports would disclose the fact.

Hit By the Coal Strike.

Coal shortage in the steel industry was becoming acute just as the wage settlement was made. There had been a slight curtailment in steel production and the prospect was that in another fortnight something like half the close. As it is steel production will still decrease for a few days at least, and fully normal coal supplies can hardly be expected until late in the month. Production in the remainder of December, after the eleven-week period discussed above, will probably average in the neighborhood of two-thirds of the pre-strike rate.

The steel strike and coal strike will be out of the way, as influences, by the beginning of the new year. The question of the future is not whether the production of the pre-strike rate of steel production. That was only a temporary measure.

The 600,000 gross tons a week of finished rolled steel estimated above represents approximately 80 per cent of the steel industry's real capacity, estimated at 750,000 tons.

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conservatively but on the assumption of a full supply of raw materials and a full supply of efficient labor.

Last January and February the steel industry operated at more than 80 per cent of capacity. At the middle of May it was running at only about 50 per cent while the rate in August was about 80 per cent. These percentages being computed from the monthly steel production report of the American Iron and Steel Institute, the last of which is for August.

New Production Standard.

The production rate in the new year will be determined by new standards, there being nothing about the rate just preceding the strike to make it a standard.

The lowered morale and decreased efficiency of the iron and steel workers will not be wiped out instantly by the mere fact of the strike being over, but conditions in this respect should become normal in the space of a couple of months or so. There remains the question of labor shortage in general. It is absurd to talk of labor shortage from the viewpoint of its affecting the production of steel and not its consumption. About half a million men, working efficiently, and including the workers at the one mines as well as the proper quota at coal mines and coke works, will produce the pig iron used by the iron foundries as well as the 37,000,000 gross tons of finished rolled steel which the physical equipment of the steel industry has capacity to produce in a year. A much larger number of men is required for the fabrication or utilization of this material.

To claim that labor shortage will restrict the production of steel more than its consumption is to assert that the steel industry will not not only supply enough wages to secure a full complement of men, and that is something the steel industry will not admit.

New High Figure Expected.

By next March, therefore, there is a distinct possibility of finished rolled steel production attaining a rate of 700,000 tons a week, or 8,400,000 tons a year, with a rate of 600,000 tons a week just before the strike when a part of the output was going into extra stocks and a rate of less than 400,000 tons a week last May, when jobbers and manufacturing consumers were reducing stocks.

With these data in mind one is not disposed to expect an acute shortage of steel. There will be, at any rate, an enormous supply, judged by all precedents, and if the supply is restricted the restrictive influence will be a general one upon industry, not an influence peculiar to the steel trade.

ON A VISIT

Switzerland—Now, dear sister, how do you like your new bonnet? Germany—Very well, indeed, thanks. And I should be quite happy if I could only get rid of these bracelets (peace terms) and this footwear (indemnities).

NEW YORK HAS CAT PROBLEM

Upkeep of Board of Education's Feline Causes Controversy.

(N. Y. Times.)

The problem of determining the duties of the Board of Education cat, the problem that was put up squarely to Commissioner of Accounts David Hirschfeld by Mayor Hylan on Monday, became doubly serious yesterday when it was ascertained that there are two cats. This disclosure, while making it apparent that there were two employees of the board not regularly accounted for on the payroll, showed that the actual outlay per cat capita on the part of the city was cut in half.

Commissioner Hirschfeld was not prepared yesterday to report on his findings because he had not yet heard from the special investigator assigned to the case. Although he had not talked with the mayor, he said, he believed that it was not the \$8.50 maintenance charge that provoked the inquiry, but "only the principle of the thing."

The plain tale of what proves to be a tallies cat, along with her accomplice, who is also her offspring, was revealed yesterday at the office of Patrick Jones, the superintendent of supplies in the Board of Education building. Once upon a time, when "art artists" and "efficiency experts" were not, the rats and mice in the Board of Education building lived almost exclusively on the choice bindings of school-books awaiting delivery, causing a loss to the city of thousands of dollars every year. Rat traps were used, but the intended victims were wary. Poison was laid along the trail, but the rats ate the poison and then topped it off with the bindings.

Whereupon the board member suggests that the city might well afford to pay for such valuable service and that he will see that the bill is O. K'd when rendered. Thus the origin of a voucher which has been sent through the regular channels periodically ever since. When the original estimate for cat maintenance was made \$6.50 was said to be a fair figure. Meantime the cost of living for cats has steadily risen, yet Hylan does not complain.

Mater familias cat is a black and white cat, with a temper so vicious that all those in the building, except the keeper, think twice before going near her, and then stay away. She is black and white and has no tail. She is said to have lost it in line of duty one night while battling with a rat in the geography sector of the supply room. Tabby cat is just black, with green eyes, and since the announcement that an investigator would arrive has worn a worried expression. The other cat was openly belligerent when she learned of Mayor Hylan's letter.

Commissioner Hirschfeld gave assurance yesterday that if he found the cat was justifying the cost of her upkeep he would not hesitate to say so, but if he

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Also Ben Rey and a complete line of Standard lines, Imperial Mixture and Players Navy Cut Cigarettes in Holly Nests Boxes.

Dandy line of Pipes, Cases, Tobacco Pouches, Cigarette Holders, now on display.

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only to return for more the next day. Anthony White, standing guard for the education S. O. S. system, was driven to extreme measures. So, enter the cat!

As the curtain rises upon the second act of the feline drama at a date set two years back, a member of the Board of Education is discovered questioning Anthony as to the cat's excuse for existence and the source of her upkeep. The keeper of the books avers that the cat is a public benefactor, confessing that in his weakness he has bought milk and meat and liver out of his own small stipend.

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SEPTUAGENARIANS' FLIGHT

London, Eng., Dec. 24.—Two of the passengers who came to London for Brussels on a Handley-Page machine were septuagenarians, two ladies age seventy-five and seventy-three. They thoroughly enjoyed the trip.

Christmas Suggestions For Men

Shirts—Clean, fresh stock in silk and linen fronts. Good variety of Neckwear, in new designs—special Xmas boxes.

Mufflers—Original patterns, silk, angora and knitted. Dandy line of gloves in wool, silk, lined and unlined gray Suedes.

Suspenders—in holiday boxes. Leather goods, club bags, umbrellas—And Jewelry.

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MACDONALD'S BRIER SMOKING TOBACCO

THE SHOPPING CROWDS NEVER WERE SO BIG

New York Cars Carried Nearly Three Millions and Half of People on Monday.

New York, Dec. 24.—Christmas shopping crowds broke all records Monday, according to officials of the Interborough Rapid Transit Company, who announced last night that 3,308,466 passengers were carried on its elevated and subway lines Monday. This is half a million more than were carried last year at the same time.

The Interborough statement points out that the number of passengers carried on its line Monday was more than twice the usual number carried daily on the entire Pennsylvania railroad system. In order to accommodate the crowds 1422 trains were run on the elevated and subway lines.

Merry Christmas Everybody

To those who made possible the splendid Christmas trade we have enjoyed, and to those with whom we expect to have dealings in the future—in short, TO EVERYBODY, we extend heartiest wishes for the Merriest Merry Christmas ever.

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8 1-2 BRUSSELS ST. 107 CHARLOTTE ST.

MUTT AND JEFF—MUTT USES DISCRETION WHEN HE BUYS HIS GIFT FOR JEFF
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MUTT AND JEFF

MUTT: I'M JOLLY WELL HAPPY. I JUST BOUGHT MUTT A FINE GOLD WATCH FOR A CHRISTMAS PRESENT, AND THAT FINISHES MY XMAS SHOPPING.

JEFF: MUTT HASN'T STARTED SHOPPING YET. THERE HE IS NOW. I THINK I'LL DROP HIM A HINT.

MUTT: OLD DEAR, CHRISTMAS IS ALMOST HERE. I TAKE IT THAT YOU AND I WILL EXCHANGE GIFTS AS USUAL.

JEFF: QUITE SO, QUITE SO!

MUTT: HOW TIME FLIES. I'M GONNA BUY A GIFT FOR YOU BEFORE I FORGET ABOUT IT! RIGHT NOW!

JEFF: OH, FINE! TEE, HEE.

MUTT: I CERTAINLY I KNOW I BOUGHT IT HERE ONLY HALF-AN-HOUR AGO, BUT, WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS, CAN I GET MY TWENTY DOLLARS BACK?