
* **HOW LONG WILL OUR COAL LAST?** *

* Special Dispatches to The Day Book from Great Coal Centers *
* Tell the Story. *

How long can American manufacturing and transportation stand a strike of hard and soft coal mines?

That is the great industrial question today, east of the Rockies.

Hard and soft coal operators say they have smaller stocks of coal than ever before at this time of year. They blame the extreme cold and long winter.

It has been barely possible for them to keep up with the demand, and very little coal has been added to the surplus piles at the mines and at storage points.

Miners say the small piles are an indication that operators will have to give in or the nation's coal bucket will be empty, and an empty national bucket means a coal famine and a vast industrial shut-down.

Big corporations, railroads, and all heavy users of coal throughout the territory controlled by union mine workers, have prepared for a suspension of work at the mines, but even at that, dispatches to The Day Book, received from correspondents in the coal centers, indicate that there are few concerns who will have more than a 90 days' stock ahead, after April 1. A good many of the smaller concerns have scarcely two weeks' surplus.

Reports below show how various coal centers stand:

Chicago—All the big concerns here at Chicago have made desperate efforts to fill their coal buckets. The Common Wealth Edison Co., using 3,000 tons a day, has enough to last 60 days, after April first. The Otis Elevator Co. are likewise fixed.

The Burlington railroad has bought 4,000 cars of eastern coal. The Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul bought up 1,800 cars. All other railroads entering Chicago have stored thousands of cars, but in no instance has a single road got enough coal to last it through three months at the outside.

Retail prices have not advanced so far, but the usual spring discounts will not be offered.

New York—Dealers are paying from 50 cents to a dollar a ton premium for immediate shipment. All but regular customers are being refused. On account of the English strike, many ocean steamships are buying coal here for both going and coming trips. The New York Central have bought several thousand cars. The textile mills of New England, The American Locomotive Co., The General Electric Co., and The International Paper Co., are all being hit hard by the lack of fuel.