

Coal Trade Nervous Over Labor Situation

Chicago, Feb. 15.—A certain nervousness is creeping into the western coal trade, irrespective of the car supply and the ability of shippers to make immediate response to inquiries. This nervousness grows out of the labor situation. Is there to be a quick settlement of the miners' wage scale, or will negotiations be strung out until or after April 1, the date when the present agreement expires? Developments of the last week pointed to the latter, which has been the usual procedure. The tri-state conference of operators and miners, representing Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana, met at Toledo, but the miners made a demand that miners' delegates from Illinois be seated. Operators objected because the operators from that state were not represented. The conference adjourned Tuesday. Doubtless an early effort will be made to reconvene at Indianapolis. But time is fleeting and some beligerent talk and resolutions on the part of the miners have created nervousness.

This nervousness is confined mainly to steam coal users. Managers of big industrial plants feel that they can take no chance in the matter of fuel supply and during the last week shippers have been deluged with specifications for increased shipments to the users desiring to begin the storage of coal against the possible stoppage of mines April 1. But this storage of coal is not making progress satisfactory to consumers. Shippers are very reluctant to increase deliveries on old time contracts above actual obligations, for the open market price is higher than the contract price.

Railroads are taking some measures to safeguard themselves against possible shortage. A number of large inquiries are in the market for steam coal, open to practically any shipper. But a price is usually named by the prospective buyers which is considerably below the level on which coal is selling. Possibly the buyers and seller will get together in the near future, but at this time they are some distance apart and consequently the storage of coal against a possible strike is limited as yet principally to such excess receipts as

excess shipments on annual contract business, not to mention his efforts to secure more cars at times. But perhaps the most uncertain factor in the western coal trade is whether or not the coal trade will be able to order coal from eastern mines, with the expectation of selling it to greedy purchasers under the impetus of a strike scare. For the western trade seems to be somewhat on all sides with big interlocking points, the correct answer to which may bring great profit. It had been generally expected that the weather had improved since the coal improvement has taken place at the delivery end of transportation, not at the shipping end. The roads have made progress in getting out of sidetracks and out of yards the coal which a month ago they were compelled by bad weather to abandon temporarily. These delayed loaded cars they have been delivering to the original purchasers with a steadiness that to the consignees has been lacking in many instances. For it is becoming more and more apparent that the average coal buyer in the West bought a lot more coal during the severe weather than he needed or than he expected to receive. He placed orders with a lavishness under the stress of his great needs that is now appalling to him. Fortunately railroads are not retaining their normal efficiency at a bound. The sidetracks are being cleaned up gradually and the weather is such as to compel the consumption of considerable coal.

With labor complications and hazards or zero temperatures it would be a safe prediction that the coal markets would tend to further easement soon for as the cars are gradually unloaded they must work their way back to mines and increase the supply there. It is to be noted, however, that the total surplus of cars in the country, as shown by reports of the American Railroad Association, is very slender, so that anything approaching an excess of cars at mines does not look particularly menacing to the operators at present.


The shipper of coal is distributing his energies in several directions. He is valiantly resisting the efforts of the buyer to cancel orders placed long ago, the coal just now arriving

who when he arrived on the spot found quite a large crowd assembled. He felt the body, but would not interfere, as the tree happened to be standing on the ground of the neighboring parish. He therefore proceeded to inform its special guard. After the lapse of half an hour this worthy returned with his comrade, and then ensued a long discussion as to whether the tree was situated in the parish or the other, so away they went to consult the ordinance books. Hours rolled by, and when they at last met again on the scene of the tragedy they came to an agreement that the tree was located in a third parish. They then walked off together to inform that particular guard, who having visited the spot and confirmed the opinion that the tree was in his special domain, started off to report the suicide to the gentleman, who finally cut the rope. Need it be added that long before this hour the unhappy young man was dead?

A Vegetable Cameo.
Spain is the land of the onion, a fact which tempted Mr. Shaw, the author of "Spain of Today," to fall into the appended easy verse. All returned travelers are sure to appreciate it for its feeling for truth rather than its resemblance to the form of "The Ancient Mariner":
"Gardens, fields everywhere
Reveal it what you drink,
Partial Cures:
"I fear you are a victim of the drink habit."
"You misleads me. Each of the pleasures of the drink habit long ago, it's nearly the identical both in name and in Philadelphia Ledger.
Happless:
"Love your neighbor as yourself."
"I do."
"Then why do you have such a headache?"
"That's just it."—New York Journal.
"The first cut-throat of the stars was published about 1880."
Too Much Like War:
"Haven't you a house?" asked the sympathetic citizen.
"Yes," answered Plodding Pete. "I had a nice home, but the first thing I knew it had a wood pile and a garden and a pump, and den it got so much like a steady job dat I resigned."—Washington Star.
Impossible:
"How do you overcome insomnia?"
"Say the multiplication table up to twelve times twelve."
"But I can't get the baby to learn!"
—Chester Leader.

Paris, Feb. 15.—When a man is found hanging, the natural course is to take a knife and cut the rope from which he is suspended. But this simple and practical piece is not invariably adopted, and the following story, which comes from Cambrai, shows the absurd length to which scruple can be carried, there being a rooted idea in some parts of the country that nothing can be done unless an official of that particular community happens to be present. Yesterday a young farm servant, after an altercation with his employer, hanged himself from a tree overlooking a railway. A passer-by saw him thus suspended, and walked on to report his discovery to the local guard.

ISLAND COMES AND GOES.
Rises in August and Disappears Regularly in February.
One of Michigan's unsolved mysteries is the island that every summer comes to the surface of Lake Orion and every winter goes back again to the depths from whence it arose.
Its periods of appearance and disappearance are nearly regular. It comes to the surface about the middle of August and goes down again about Feb. 15. What causes it to act thus strangely is a conundrum that none has been able to solve, but to keep it above water or compel it to remain in the depths have been alike without results.
On one occasion a number of farmers and teamsters resolved to put the island out of moving business. In their efforts to do so they hauled many loads of stone and deposited them on it during the early part of winter, believing that when it went down in February it would go down for good, weighted as it was with the stones. But the following August saw it load up serenely from below—minus its load of stones.
At another time an effort was made to keep it on the surface, and it was chained to the surrounding country with heavy log chains. When its time for departure came it departed, and the log chains were never recovered.
The island is composed of soft mud and rushes, and there are some skeptical souls who attribute its formation and appearance and disappearance to the gathering of vegetation in one spot by the currents of the lake and its subsequent decay.—Boston Herald.



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DEAD ENTIRELY WHEN CUT DOWN

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