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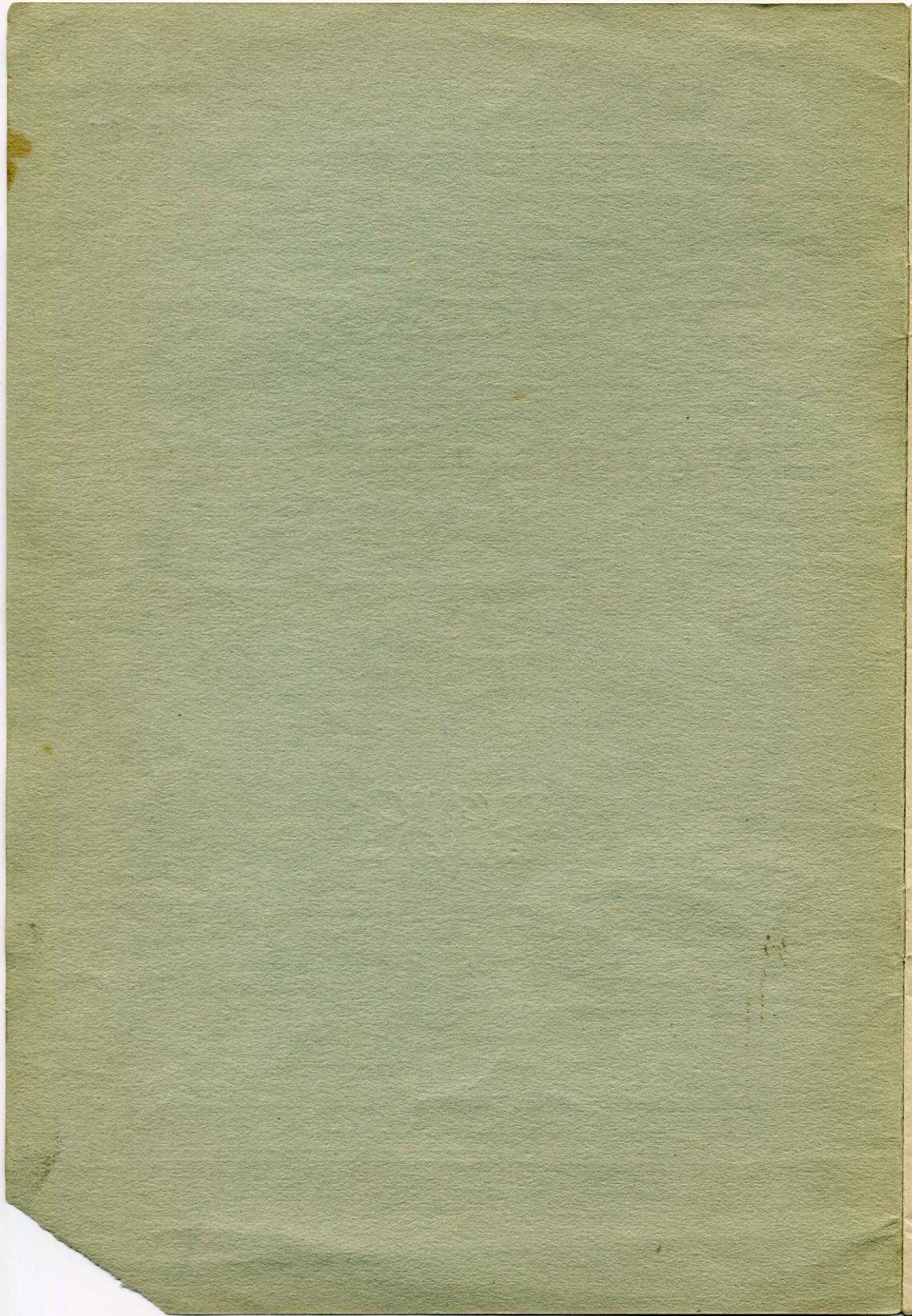
THE PAINT CREEK SITUATION

A Review From the Operator's
Standpoint.



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THE PAINT CREEK SITUATION

A Review From the Operator's Standpoint.

Realizing that the State of West Virginia and the officials charged with its government are profoundly interested in the events that have transpired recently in what is known as the Paint Creek mining district, we respectfully submit for your consideration the following statement of facts:

Twelve operations are involved in the present disturbance. These mines occupy a frontage of about twelve miles on the Paint Creek branch of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad.

The last published report of the State Mine Inspector, covering the year ending June 30th, 1911, shows that at that time 962 men were employed who produced during the year 977,856 tons of 2,000 lbs.

That the relations existing between the miners and operators were harmonious is illustrated by the fact that the Commissioner for the Kanawha operators only had one call in two years to adjudicate a difference with the men.

Mining conditions are generally good—eight of the mines having a seam thickness of five feet to seven feet six inches.

A thrifty miner at one plant has been able to accumulate over \$4,000.00, now deposited in a Savings Bank, in a period of seven years and several hundred men had savings accounts of smaller amounts.

As an illustration of fair earnings we will cite a few averages taken from the pay rolls.

Mine A. Running time, 16 days in one month.

25 miners earned \$2,177.90. Average, \$87.12.

4 Machine men \$390.55. Average, \$97.64.

Mine B. Running time, 16 days in one month.

24 miners earned \$2,118.93. Average, \$88.29.

4 Machine men, \$390.55. Average, \$97.64.

Mine C. Running time, 14 days in one month.

25 miners earned \$2,218.55. Average, \$88.74.

The earnings of eleven men who worked in the same places in a mine for a period of five consecutive months, showed average earnings of \$87.62 per month.

On the first of April the wage agreements with the men expired by time limitation but work was continued, pending an adjustment of a new scale, until April 19th when work at all of the Union mines in the Kanawha district was stopped. Negotiations were re-opened about May 1st and concluded a few days later when all of the district signed a new scale except the Paint Creek mines. These companies offered their employees a renewal of the old scale and working conditions, which was refused.

National representatives of the Mine Workers Union had offered to contract at the old scale provided they were given what is called a "check-off". This means that the companies would be compelled to collect Union dues and initiation fees from every man on the pay rolls whether a member of the Union or not—and these dues must be charged after house rent and a doctor's charge and have priority over food or household necessities. About 10 per cent. of the men belonged to the Union but the check-off was demanded for the entire force. The Paint Creek operators refused to enter into an agreement of this character and this ended the negotiations.

Mining was resumed at the Imperial mines May 12th; at Greenbrier and Grose in June and at Standard and Wacomah in the early part of July.

In this connection it is to be noted that there has been, and is, dur-

ing the whole of the present year a shortage of labor in the Kanawha Coal District as well as elsewhere in the State, and that more than twice as many men as were employed on Paint Creek April 19th could have found and can now find, within twenty-four hours, work at mines in the district operating under contracts with the Union Mine Workers and paying the Union scale. So that all men who did not wish to work on Paint Creek could have gotten work elsewhere under satisfactory conditions with practically no loss of time.

The men occupying company houses who did not care to work were given due notice to move elsewhere, that the companies might have their own houses for the use of their own men. In connection with these notices the companies made the following offers:

A. To inventory, move and load the household property on board railroad cars; to prepay the freight on the same to any designated station in the Kanawha or New River district; to buy the railroad tickets to any point in either district for the head of the household and each member of his family.

B. Or, the companies would inventory, warehouse and take care of the property for a reasonable length of time and then carry out the conditions recited in paragraph A.

Officials of U. M. W. urged the men to refuse these offers and hold possession of the property. Many of the men moved and got work elsewhere. Where the advice of the Union officials was followed the companies were compelled to remove the goods, but in every instance orders were given to the officers to postpone the removal in all cases where illness or approaching maternity might make it inconvenient.

Long before the closing of the conferences in regard to a new contract, miners in portions of the Kanawha district commenced to buy guns, principally army rifles, and many men became armed in March and April. During April men with weapons met every train to threaten any incoming workmen and special officers. Finally, the danger from these lawless gangs became so great that the operators were compelled, for the protection of their men and property, to engage the services of special officers. These officers are men who were selected after careful investigation; they are men of good repute, sober and trustworthy—and many of them are under heavy bonds. The men working for the companies do not object to this protection and every objection has come from outside sources.

It is well at this time to consider the chronological sequence of the

events referred to.

March and April. Guns being imported.

April. Armed men meeting trains.

May 9th. A mob of about 150 men, from 75 to 100 of whom were armed, formed at Hansford and marched up the Creek for the purpose of terrorizing the operators and those who were preparing to work for them.

May 3rd. Ten special officers arrived and twelve more arrived a few days later to guard twelve operations owning seventeen mines that were located along the railroad line for a distance of twelve miles.

About this time scores of anonymous letters were sent to the workmen threatening them with declarations that they "would be hung on a bridge", "shot full of holes", &c.

About May 26th or 27th the disturbers went up on the side of the mountain at Mucklow and cleared away some underbrush to enable the gun men to have a clear line of vision from their proposed hiding place to the company buildings. On the morning of May 29th while the special officers were going unarmed from their sleeping quarters to breakfast, the concealed mob on the mountain opened fire upon them. Judging from the number of rifle shells afterwards found on the ground, about 300 shots were fired. This was a deliberate, carefully planned attempt at assassination—and it was also the opening of hostilities, the first overt act.

Following this attack a Gatling gun was brought in as a further measure of protection. It was fired experimentally by the instructor the day of its arrival and was in service during the attacks at a later date upon the property.

The second attack by concealed men was made June 5th when one of their number, an Italian from the Boomer mines, some 15 miles distant, was killed. A number of arrests followed and a number of these men were found to be carrying ropes cut in lengths of about ten feet—evidently for the purpose of hanging any one they might capture—and seven of these ropes were secured. Some of the men were also carrying dynamite.

July 18th. A man named Bobbitt, bookkeeper for the Paint Creek Collieries, was walking along the open road with his wife and child when they were fired upon by a small mob in ambush on the mountain. Mr. Bobbitt was unarmed and unprotected but after a very narrow escape he found shelter with his family behind a power house.

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On the 25th of July special officers W. W. Phaupp and _____ Stringer, while en route to the main line of the C. & O. Railroad on a railroad velocipede, passed through a crowd of armed agitators. The wheel was not stopped but after the riders had passed beyond the crowd the latter opened fire, shooting at the backs of the two officers. Mr. Stringer was killed instantly. Mr. Phaupp was badly wounded (and is still in a hospital) but managed to crawl into some weeds by the track and afterwards escaped.

The rescue party that came for the remains of Mr. Stringer was driven off. During the night some of the mob went to the body, stole a watch and money amounting to \$100.00 and then with a savagery almost unheard of in this country, smashed in the skull with a stone or club and then rolled the body over on its back, unfastened the clothing and exposed the person of this victim of a mob's fury.

On the next day, July 26th, was the shooting at Mucklow, following which the troops came on the scene. During the night before the mob had picketed the Creek to prevent any person entering or leaving, and it was a group of these pickets which killed Mr. Stringer and wounded Mr. Phaupp.

At times as many as one thousand men, mostly armed, have marched up and down Paint Creek and roved the mountains—some seeking opportunities to damage property and persons—others to terrorize and intimidate law abiding citizens who want to work.

Instances of vandalism in addition to those mentioned above have been the cutting of the telephone wires near Holly Grove at the time Mr. Stringer was killed; at various times and places shooting into houses; the attempt to wreck the Scranton tippie when five mine cars were turned loose at the top of the plane; and shooting into a car of miners being brought in to the mines.

Savagery was illustrated by the disgraceful treatment of Mr. Stringer's body. Even a body enclosed in a coffin was not exempt from the malice of these men. The coffin case while awaiting shipment at East Bank was disfigured by such words as "Gone to H——. More to go", "D——d thugs", "D——d guards".

While Mr. Phaupp was escaping from the attack on July 25th his coat was lost, and found by the mob. A week ago this blood stained coat was exhibited by a public speaker and the crowd was told that it was "the only guard's coat the speaker had ever seen that was trim-

med to the speaker's notion." That coat was then hacked to pieces by men who wanted, and wore pinned on their coats, pieces of it as souvenirs.

At the present time there are seven Union officials in the district from the States of Iowa, Illinois, Ohio and Missouri and men from Michigan and Indiana have been in the field.

The national officials are sending in about \$5,000 per week to support the men who are maintaining the disturbances.

The camp at Holly Grove contains not more than 75 former employees of the Paint Creek Companies. The disturbances are caused by disorderly men coming in from various points all over the district.

The operators have constructed over fourteen hundred buildings on the Creek and they have total investments there amounting to at least \$2,000,000.00 but this property is placed in jeopardy by the acts of the agitators from other mines and other states. The hope of the leaders has been to create such a disturbance so huge as to compel surrender to the Union by public officials and us. They have all to gain and nothing to lose by this policy; and just as long as there is a ray of hope that the public officials can be influenced to support the Union demands the rioting will be continued.

There is no strike on Paint Creek. The old contract is closed. The employers and the Union have no agreement of any kind and the operators have opened their mines to those who are ready to work in them.

We own our property and we are entitled to enjoy it. We do not want to make any contracts or agreements with the Union, particularly as its officials have received and distributed army rifles that they must have known were to be used for shooting at men.

If these lawless men from our own and other states are supported in their demands, the mining industry of West Virginia will be so seriously injured that it may not recover for years—and we venture the assertion that there is not a mining district in the State that will not within three months be subject to disturbances of the same character.

Yours very truly,

PAINT CREEK COLLIERIES COMPANY,
STANDARD SPLINT & GAS COAL COMPANY,
IMPERIAL COLLIERY COMPANY.

