

COKE REGION MINERS FACE ARMED BOSSES

Private Army Tries to Enforce Wage Cut

By A. JAKIRA.

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MARIANNA, Pa., Nov. 13—Over 600 men are out on strike here refusing to accept the 1917 scale which the coal operators are trying to put into effect in place of the 1923 scale which is in force now.

Marianna, a quiet little mining town in ordinary times, has now virtually been turned into a military camp by the coal company. The Pittsburgh Sun, a capitalist sheet, on Nov. 6, reporting on the situation in Marianna, writes:

"No disorder has marked the resumption on the old scale. However, Sheriff Otto Luellen of Washington county has his office ready to cope with any situation that may arise."

The mines were surrounded by an iron fence so that the scabs may be protected. Armed guards were stationed at strategic points. Four powerful searchlights were placed on the roofs of the company buildings so that every move of the striking miners can be watched day and night.

To show that the sheriff is ready to cope with any situation that may arise a number of shots were fired on Tuesday night, Nov. 10 by the armed hirelings of the company. Fortunately no one was wounded or killed.

Attempt to Get Scabs Fails.

Several attempts were made by the Bethlehem Mines corporation, which owns the mines and the coke ovens here, to import scabs. Special arrangements were made to have the trains carrying the scabs stop inside the gates under the protection of the iron fences.

But apparently the imported scabs are leaving the grounds as fast as they arrive. They apparently do not like the protection given them by the armed deputy sheriffs. At the time these lines are written not more than a dozen scabs, or rats, as they are usually called here, remain on the job. There is no resumption on the old scale.

The mines are completely shut down. The coke ovens remain closed. The miners stand united as one man against the attempts of the operators to turn the wage scale eight years back.

Evicts Miners from Company Houses.

Most of the miners live in company houses. Seven of these miners were ordered to "move." The company did not dare to order wholesale evictions but picked out the seven most active men, including the five officers of the local union.

The situation in the coke region is getting more and more serious. The strike wave is spreading, the company is preparing armed forces to cope with "any situation that may arise." This situation exists not only in Marianna but in numerous other places in the coke region.

What is needed now is concerted action on the part of the miners both of the soft coal and the anthracite regions. The time is opportune now for the United Mine Workers of District No. 5 to start an energetic campaign to organize the unorganized fields.

Time Opportune for Union.

The time is opportune now for the union to start an energetic campaign to arouse public sentiment against the outrageous attempts of the coal operators to force a reduction in wages at a time when the cost of living is climbing mountain high.

It is up to the progressive miners everywhere to push their union into action against the united forces of the coal operators and against the use of armed guards against the striking miners.