

# COAL NEGOTIATIONS OFF

## Operators Refuse to Grant Mr. Mitchell an Interview.

This Ends All Prospects of a Settlement Outside the Strike Commission—  
Their Action a Surprise.

At a meeting of the coal road Presidents and independent operators, held in this city yesterday, the suggestion that the operators should meet Mr. Mitchell and other representatives of the United Mine Workers on Friday was rejected, thereby putting an end to all prospects for an adjustment of the trouble except through the Anthracite Coal Strike Commission.

The independent operators who came here to protest to the coal Presidents against a cessation of hearings by the commission met in the forenoon at 68 William Street to lay their plans. This is the New York office of Clarence D. Simpson of the West End Coal Company, one of the firms of independent operators involved in the dispute. They went in a body to the office of the Central Railroad of New Jersey, where the weekly conference of the Presidents of the coal-carrying roads was held in the afternoon.

The coal Presidents who attended were George F. Baer, President of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad; W. H. Truesdale, President of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad; Thomas P. Fowler, President of the New York, Ontario and Western Railroad; Robert M. Olyphant, President, and David Willcox, General Counsel, of the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company; E. B. Thomas, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Erie Railroad; Irving Stearns of Coxe Brothers & Co., Alfred Walter, President of the Lehigh Valley Railroad, and John Markle of G. B. Markle & Co.

After the independent operators had been at the meeting for about two hours C. D. Simpson handed out a statement to the reporters containing their protest against the discontinuance of the hearings before the commission. It declares that the settlement on the basis of a nine-hour workday and a 10 per cent. advance in wages would be unjust, and continues:

We believe that such a settlement at this time would forever establish the power to perpetuate the injustice perpetrated by the United Mine Workers; that such a settlement would be in the eyes of the public a confession that we had been guilty of all the offenses charged against us by the said Mine Workers.

It goes on to say that the independent operators have a perfect and complete defense to the complaints of the mine workers, and that such a settlement would be an absolute and unconditional surrender to the miners' union. This would eventually make matters unbearable. The hearings before the anthracite commission, it says, present the first opportunity the operators have had of presenting their case to the general public. It concludes:

It is a duty that we owe to ourselves as well as to the general public to prove that the charges of injustice, barbarity, &c., have no foundation in fact, something which the independent operators at least propose to do.

The principal arguments at the conference on behalf of the independent operators were made by W. L. Connell, who is Recorder of Scranton, and H. C. Reynolds. C. D. Simpson made a statement in which he said that undue prominence had been given to Mr. Mitchell in the taking of testimony. The only points of value ascertained were that he was in sympathy with the miners, and was not familiar with the anthracite situation. The meeting adjourned at 3:20 P. M., and the following statement was given out by Mr. Baer:

The following private operators: Clear Spring Coal Company, represented by J. L. Cake, General Manager, and W. H. Gearhart, Secretary; Jermyn & Co., James J. Jermyn; A. D. & F. M. Spencer; the Mount Jessup Coal Company, Limited, W. W. Watson, Treasurer; the Moosic Mountain Coal Company, W. W. Watson, Treasurer; the West End Coal Company, C. D. Simpson, President; People's Coal Company, J. L. Crawford, President; the Stevens Coal Company, Henry W. Kingsbury, General Manager; Elliott McClure & Co.; Riverside Coal Company, J. N. Kier, Vice President and General Manager; the Pine Hill Coal Company, Edward Sturges, President; the Clarence Coal Company, Edward Sturges; Robertson & Law; the Dolph Coal Company, Limited, E. S. Dolph, Secretary; W. G. Robertson, General Manager; Austin Coal Company, W. G. Robertson, President and General Manager; Carney & Brown; Black Diamond Coal Company, W. G. Thomas, President; the Rant Coal Company, J. L. Cake, Vice President; the Enterprise Coal Company, W. H. Gearhart, President; the Green Ridge Coal Company, W. L. Connell, Treasurer; Wyoming Coal and Land Company, H. C. Reynolds; the Nay Aug Coal Company, William J. Hands, President, and Charles G. Bradbury, Secretary; William Connell & Co., William Connell, together with a number of operators from other regions, including Lewis A. Riley, President Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company; Mr. Taylor of the St. Clair Coal Company, and John Markle, met the coal Presidents, who had signed the request to the President of the United States.

They presented a protest against any adjustment being made at this time, insisting that the principles involved were so serious and affected so many interests that it was necessary now to have the commission hear all the facts and pass its judgment upon the whole controversy.

Mr. Simpson, as Chairman, read a paper, expressing their views, and other gentlemen expressed decided opinions.

In the midst of the conference the request came from Washington to the operators of both classes to meet Mr. Mitchell and his associates next Friday morning at 10 o'clock. The parties present, without dissent, instructed Mr. Baer to make the following answer:

"The conditions are such that no substantial progress toward an adjustment can be made by the suggested meeting. The general judgment of the operators is that it will be best, for the present, to go on with the hearing."

Mr. Baer was asked when the meeting was over if there was any truth in the statement that he was to be made General President of all the anthracite roads. He replied that there was no truth in the statement.

Asked if he was made President of the Lehigh Valley Railroad, he said:

"No, and I never will be."

The committee of independent operators announced that they would leave at once for their respective homes. They had nothing to add, they said, to the statements which had been given out.