

REVIEW OF THE MINING SITUATION—1898.

The prolonged suspension which occurred last year throughout the principal bituminous coal districts of the country, supplemented this year by a local reign of terror at Pana, and the more unfortunate tragedy at Virden, in this State, has attracted widespread and interested attention to the new conditions surrounding the mining industry, and the influences, whether for better or worse, that have quietly but effectively operated to change its character.

No one familiar with the general mining methods of the present will dispute the statement that the occupation of the old-time miner has practically been destroyed. This result has been gradually reached, partly through the discovery and application of easier methods of mining consequent upon the introduction of machinery, but principally on account of the system that, from considerations of immediate business and profit, it was presumed more advantageous to encourage and prefer the employment of a less superior class of workmen.

Employers chafed under the imaginary restraints imposed by the higher demands of the well disciplined tradesman. To resist this force and perfect the other policy, liberal inducements were offered to a certain class of European workmen, whose meagre necessities made it comparatively easy to comply with their moderate wage demands.

It was assumed that the substitution of the new for the old workman would not only reduce the former wage standard, but destroy the possibility of future resistance by rendering more difficult the success of organized effort. Thus the process of displacement continued until fully 60 per cent of the workers in and around the mines are men who are almost strangers to the English tongue, many of whom have but recently, and in most instances imperfectly, learned the new and less difficult art of producing coal. Those responsible for this change in the personnel of the mining fraternity have had

occasion in late years to learn the important, though painful, lesson, that while wholesale importations of cheaper labor served the temporary purpose of breaking the high American wage line, their potentialities in the way of subsequent assimilation had not been thoroughly considered, and the later consciousness of the purposes for which they had been used created in time a somewhat vindictive reaction, which, encouraged by the remaining influence of those they superceded, is now expressing itself in persistent, organized demands for better conditions.

Recent experience demonstrates that this force is capable of being mobilized and that it can be relied upon to coöperate with the older miners in support of the last argument, namely, the right to strike. This early and rather unexpected condition, viewed from the wage earner's standpoint, renders the future of the craft more hopeful than it could otherwise be considered, and demands some responsive action on the part of the employers.

We have got away from the old policy of local settlements. Profits from mining investments are now too small to permit of sectional adjustments. Competition's unrelenting sway has made common victims of all. Capacity to produce in excess of market demands, together with modern transportation facilities, have, to a great extent, removed the favored competitor and placed all on a basis of approximate equality.

It is this seemingly unnatural condition of business that makes possible the fierce competition between the mines of West Virginia and those of Illinois in the markets of the northwest.

In view of this situation, what relief is there for those interested in this industry except through a broader and more perfect union of forces? Despite all philosophy, self-interest colors, and often controls, our judgment. Those who a few years ago opposed the exactions of unionism should not now be charged with inconsistency for regarding it as a necessary means of self-protection. New evils, whether self-inflicted or not, suggest new methods of treatment. The present plan of joint action, as indicated by the proposed inter state conferences of miners and operators, for the purpose of agreeing as to rates of wages and other terms of employment, is not a new one. That system was first tried over twelve years ago, when it was the writer's privilege to participate in the proceedings of the initial meeting. For some time success attended the movement and extravagant hopes were entertained as to the future effects on the industry. In the course of time

opposition to the scale fixed by the inter state convention asserted itself, particularly as applying to the rate at that time agreed upon for the Grape Creek field. Mine owners then in the extreme eastern part of the State insisted that the rate fixed was unfair; that they could not meet the competition of western Indiana. This disagreement resulted in a year's strike. The contest bankrupted the company, but it also compelled the operators of Illinois to withdraw from the inter state conferences.

This experience need not discourage the friends of these methods, but it serves to call attention to the complex and difficult character of the questions with which the representatives of the mining industry are now forced to deal. The stubborn attitude of the mine owners at Pana, in the present crisis, corresponds substantially with the resistance offered by the Grape Creek operators twelve years ago, and a settlement effected at Pana, adverse to the miners, may, to some extent, control and disturb the deliberations of future scale conventions.

It is rather a sad commentary on the power and judgment of a convention representing the interest of four or five important coal states when one displeased individual or company can defeat the general plan, and through his or its opposition, force several hundred thousand miners to accept a reduced mining rate.

This has been the effect of former disagreements, and similar results may be anticipated until the administrative details of the organization are perfected in such a manner as to guarantee a greater measure of protection to those who are willing to be governed by the action of such bodies, and also the necessary power to control and discipline those who unreasonably refuse to coöperate. When miners and operators thoroughly realize that the present contest is one for the preservation of their industry, it should need no argument to induce them to create an emergency fund that could be easily and speedily raised and used against recalcitrant operators and miners for the purpose of enforcing their decrees.

A charitable disposition to give each competitor a reasonable share of a limited market has made prominent the question of transportation charges, thus forcing the formulation of a scale based on the theory of guarding the interests of the least favored operator. Miners have consented and accepted the policy, seemingly unconscious of the limitations it imposes in the important matter of advancing wages.

Under prevailing methods, general mining rates are determined, not on the average but on the most unfavorable existing conditions. The plant furthest removed from the market, and for other reasons most expensive to operate, limits and defines the possible advance. This is particularly true considering the failure so far to materially enhance the selling price of coal, and where advantages to the industry result from greater economy in production.

It would seem necessary, in order to insure the future success and permanency of the plan now being tried, either to form an alliance with the transportation companies, a most difficult undertaking, or ignore altogether the factor of freight charges and fix a mining rate based on the earning capacity of the mine. This presupposes an equalization of wages, which is really the object sought in the present movement, and probably the abandonment of some unprofitable mines.

This plan, like the other, is not new, as it is now in operation in some of the large mining districts of England, where, according to reports, it has given general satisfaction. Of the results thus far accomplished by the present system there can not be two opinions. It has created between the operators and operatives a stronger feeling of common fellowship. Direct personal contact has helped to destroy the old spirit of animosity. Aside from the advance in mining rates secured by this process, many important concessions have been made. The right to unite for craft protection has not only been publicly recognized but reciprocated and encouraged. Through the medium of joint conferences have come many changes that wage earners have long worked and waited for. The establishment of the eight hour work day will, in time, be equivalent to an increase in wages. It will not only furnish additional opportunities for physical, moral and intellectual improvement, but relieve the pressure of an overstocked market, which in turn will exert its proper effect on the value of the miner's product. This is a permanent change, for good, as there is no precedent in modern history warranting the thought of ever again returning to the old system. All tendencies are in the other direction.

Part of the agreement reached at Chicago last January provided that the wages of coal miners should be paid semi-monthly. After years of agitation the miners win through friendly intercourse what had frequently been denied them by the courts. The system of weighing and paying for coal on the basis of gross weight, so far as the miners of this State are concerned, was also conceded.

Thus have been removed many of the grievances prolific of much former discontent, by mutual methods more binding than legal enactments and without the friction of the law's enforcement.

More or less opposition was expected in the enforcement of an inter state mining scale, first, on the part of those who, while subject to its provisions, were not represented at the conference, and who did not consider themselves bound by its decisions; and second, on the part of mine owners who, while participating in the proceedings, felt that the action taken was prejudicial to their interests.

This State experienced both phases of the difficulty. The Chicago-Virden Coal Co., represented at the Chicago meeting, and certain coal companies at Pana, claiming that they were not represented, both refused to recognize the authority of the convention or to comply with the scale. While anticipating some local resistance, the methods adopted by the opposition created surprise, particularly as they invoked the exercise of a new executive function. The Virden Coal Co. expressed its readiness to sustain its contention that it was impossible for them to operate and pay the scale by submitting its claims to the judgment of the State Board of Arbitration, and signed a contract with the members of said Board to abide by the award. After several days' session the Board, considering the evidence presented, decided that the company could pay the 40-cent rate fixed for that field and operate at a profit.

Notwithstanding the written contract the company repudiated the decision and continued the contest. Later, at the request of the company, a committee from the national executive board of the United Mine Workers was selected, with authority from the general union to take evidence and agree upon a mining price for that company. This committee, on a complete and detailed consideration of all the facts, affirmed the decision of the State Arbitration Board, and again the company declined to comply with the verdict. Having taken the case to the court of last appeal, the company persisted in violating its written agreement.

At Pana the situation was somewhat different, inasmuch as the companies there absolutely refused to submit the questions at issue to any committee or to any board of arbitration, basing their action on the old assumption that the books of those corporations were private property and the State had not the right to even request that they be examined.

Between the conduct of a corporation that deliberately violated its contracts and one that denied that the State or the public had any

interest in the management of its business affairs, it is somewhat difficult to judge. Yet, from a standpoint of consistency, the latter's course was the most commendable. Of the twenty mines in the State which refused to pay the scale rate for mining, those at Virden and Pana excited the most interest on account of the policy pursued to defeat the plan of the inter state convention.

During the brief life of the movement some very interesting developments have occurred and important issues presented. While the suspension of last year was in progress certain coal companies in the State attempted to terminate it by the importation of Chinamen, but on learning that Governor Tanner, as the controlling power of the State's military forces, refused to become a partner to this assault on the interests of society, the plan was abandoned, notwithstanding the contract for their transportation had been signed.

This intimation of the Governor's position on the question of importing labor into the State was evidently misunderstood by the obstreperous mine owners at Virden, who, with due notice of what would result, deliberately proceeded to construct a stockade about the mine and attempted to import negroes from the south, many of them ex-convicts, and all under the protection of foreign guns. Governor Tanner promptly and correctly interpreted this demonstration as a direct challenge to the State government, and at once ordered the militia there, not as other governors have done, to protect the mine owners in operating their plants with such labor, but with strict instructions not to permit their disembarkation at Virden.

This is the first time in the history of the State or of the nation that the military power of the law, during an industrial contest, has been exercised in defense of the rights of American labor.

It is not to be wondered at that interests long accustomed to the protection of the military in their battles with laboring men should be inexpressibly shocked at this new expression of executive power. Can the capitalistic press that have so bitterly assailed the Governor for his action in the Virden strike defend their position without at the same time approving a policy that militates against the best interests of society? However disagreeable this attitude may appear, it is well that the real sentiments of the moneyed press should be clearly defined. This class was not interested in ascertaining the facts or considering the ethical features of the situation. It was enough for them to know that a criminal conspiracy to reduce wages

through the importation of convict workmen had been defeated by the courage and conscience of the present chief executive of the State.

Great misapprehension existed concerning the status of the difficulty at Virden. It was represented that the miners were striking against a reduction of wages, and those who were willing to accept the terms offered by the company should be protected from molestation. The facts are, the miners were not on strike. They were willing to resume at the rate fixed for that field by the convention at which their employers were represented. They were locked out because the mine owners refused to pay the advanced mining rate conceded by their competitors.

Again, those who attempted to take the place of the locked-out miners did not move of their own volition, but came as an army, some of them in cattle cars, and all under the protection of Winchesters in the possession of men disqualified to perform police duty under the laws of this State.

Governor Tanner, in a speech delivered at Trenton, November 7, 1898, reviewing the situation and assigning reasons warranting the action taken, spoke in part as follows:

"In a discussion of the Virden riot, two questions present themselves for decision: First, were the proprietors of the Virden mine justified, under the existing circumstances, in bringing labor from any other point, in or out of the State of Illinois, to take the places of the coal miners already on the ground? Second, was the form, as well as the substance, of their action in the premises in accord with the statutes, or did they act in an unlawful manner?

"As to the first of these questions, it must be remembered that the Virden mine was represented in the Interstate and State Mining Congress, called to agree upon a scale of prices to be paid by the owners for bituminous coal in every district of the competitive area, which extended in a general way from West Virginia to Illinois. That convention was authorized to fix the price of mining coal wherever found in that area, having regard to local conditions in each district, such as depth and thickness of vein, the quality of coal, distance from the market, and other physical conditions. If it had no such authority it was a solemn farce and fraud upon its face, and its conclusions could have no binding effect upon the owners of the mines or the operatives. Its action, of course, could have no binding effect in any event upon the owners of mines not represented in this congress, and it is to be assumed that the representatives of each district reserved the right to withdraw from the deliberations of the body at any stage of the proceedings, if dissatisfied with its conclusions and recommendations.

"The Virden and Pana mines were represented at Springfield. They had a voice, by their representatives, in the deliberations of the conference, and their representatives did not withdraw or give notice of a purpose to refuse to abide by the scale of wages there assented to and adopted, and now in force in all other parts of this State. This agreement has all the essential features of a contract, the contracting parties being the mine owners, as a body, on the one hand, and the miners, as a body, on the other.

"Personally, I believe that employes and laboring men have the same natural and legal right to form combinations for the purpose of maintaining a living wage that employers have to combine in order to keep up the price of their manufactured products and to keep down the price of labor.

"It appears to me that of all obligations that can be formed, none is so justifiable, or expedient, or sacred, as an agreement in which the employers of labor and their employes unite upon equal terms and have a common interest. That was precisely the character of the agreement reached at Springfield, to which the Virden and Pana mine owners were parties.

"At this point I must be permitted to make another distinction of great importance in the elucidation of this somewhat ethical and legal problem. I have been greatly misunderstood and misrepresented as to my official attitude touching the controversy between the owners of the Virden property and their employes. Let me explain it as best I can. No lawyer or business man will contend for a moment that under the terms of the Springfield agreement these gentlemen were under any legal obligation to operate their mine at any pecuniary loss. They claimed that it would be impossible for them to successfully compete with their business rivals at the rate of wages for mining coal fixed for their district by that convention, and suspended operations. Other mines, however, in the same field, with similar physical conditions, for instance, all those in Sangamon, Logan, Macon and Menard counties, carried out the Springfield contract and paid the scale of 40 cents per ton, and I believe (and I have heard nothing to the contrary), are running at a profit.

"The Virden operators then made an offer of a lower rate—25 cents per ton—which was refused. The situation, therefore, was not a strike by the miners, as is charged in the public prints, but was a 'lockout' by the mine owners. It existed, not by the choice of the miners, but by that of the mine owners. When it became as intolerable to the latter as it had long been to the former, they took steps to end it by bringing in cheap labor to take the place of the men already upon the ground.

"No one, I think, possessed of the ordinary sensibilities and sympathies of a normal human being can contemplate the condition of the workingman who is both able and willing to work and who can not find remunerative employment without experiencing the emotion of pity. The case of the workingman is peculiarly distressing when, in order to secure employment, he is compelled to sever the ties which bind him to the community of which he is a member, to sell the little home bought and partly paid for with his scanty savings—the home in which his children were born, and from which possibly some of them have been carried to their premature graves in the village cemetery—and to go forth once more into the cold world a wanderer and a fugi-

tive, exposed to the charge from the mouths of strangers that he is a pauper and a tramp, and a suspicion that his condition is the result of his own vices, indolence and self-indulgent extravagance. If the workingman strikes, in the hope of bettering his condition, he takes the risk of failure and its consequences to himself and his family, so that, while we feel compassion for him, we nevertheless regard his fate as the fortune of war.

"But these Virden miners did not strike; therefore they are doubly worthy of pity; and though we grant that the mine owners had the legal right to further oppress these laboring men, I contend that they did not have the moral right to do so. It was an act of tyranny, for which they must account to their consciences and to their God. If it is sought to justify it upon the ground of the exigencies of business, all I have to say is that men have no right to crush the life out of other men for the sake of money. It is sometimes a man's duty to fail in business when success is attained only through wrong-doing.

"As I view the situation at Virden and Pana, the mine owners there were not bound by the terms of the Springfield agreement to operate their mines at a loss. But they were morally bound to keep their contract and pay the scale or close the mines, regardless of consequences to themselves. They had, of course, a right to operate them at a reduction from the scale if their employes would consent to such reduction, but not otherwise. This consent they failed to secure. When they went to Alabama for miners they may not have transcended their legal right, but they stepped across the line which marks the boundary between ethical and unethical conduct. The instinct of their former employes told the latter that they were wronged, and they felt the indignation which universally follows the sense of an attempted personal injury and injustice. Every laboring man in the United States who knows the facts felt precisely as they did.

"The action of the Virden mine-owners was, moreover, contrary to public policy. The attempt has been made, for political reasons, to make it appear that my position in opposing the introduction of Alabama miners into the Virden mine was based upon their color. No negro of average intelligence and honesty will be deceived by this insinuation. I am as free as any man from color and race prejudice. I am the only Governor in the United States who sent to the field, in response to the call of the President for volunteers, a negro regiment, officered by negroes, with a negro colonel at its head. That charge, at best, must fall to the ground. The Republican party is and has always been and will long continue to be the negro's best and only political friend. But I know, as every well informed man knows, that the coal mining industry in Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama has been developed under the able lead of a syndicate of capitalists who were the lessees of convict labor in all the three states named; that convicts, white and black, in the south, have been and are employed in these syndicate mines, and that originally there were few, if any, coal miners in these states who did not acquire the knowledge of their trade in those mines while under sentence for crime. It is impossible to believe that any wholesale importation of miners from the south

into any northern state can occur without the introduction into our communities of a most undesirable element of the population—not because they are negroes, but because they are ex convicts.

“But if all that I have said thus far should be dismissed from consideration as irrelevant or inconclusive, the fact remains, even though it should be conceded that they had a legal right to bring this labor into the State, that they proceeded to do so in an illegal manner, and after notification from the highest authority in the State—its Chief Executive—that their action was calculated to provoke riot and bloodshed. They can not evade the responsibility for the fatal issue of the Virden riot by hiding behind the constitution of the United States. That noble instrument was never designed to be a shield for tyranny and murder.

“Did these negroes come here as free men? Or were they brought here as slaves? Free men, on a lawful and peaceable errand, need no arms and no hired protection upon any foot of soil covered by the American flag. Men in a locked car are not free men, but prisoners. These men were prisoners without authority of law. They were under no criminal charge, had not been tried, and were entitled to go and come at their pleasure. The men who, under the guise of their protectors, were in fact their jailers, had no legal authority to bear or use arms. They were outlaws. A lawful purpose can be carried out under the protection of law without the aid of hired thugs and assassins. Who hired these assassins? What right had they to hire them? They were not even citizens of this State, but armed invaders of its soil—fifty or sixty of them, armed with repeating Winchester rifles loaded with powder and ball, invading our State for the purpose of shooting—and they did shoot down—our citizens.

“I am a man of peace, but there is one thing which I value more highly than the public peace, and that is public justice.”

This statement presents in a clear and forcible manner all the facts of the case, and thoroughly destroys the criticism of an unfriendly press. With the progress of modern opinion comes new responsibilities which men active in the sphere of industry or politics can neither ignore nor avoid. Our complex system of industrial life has revolutionized ancient notions and imposed additional duties, principal among which is the recognition that the peace and interest of the public must be conserved, even at the cost of denying certain abstract individual privileges—not on the theory of “the greatest good to the greatest number,” a maxim open to serious criticism—but on the broadest grounds of public welfare which necessarily includes the interest of all. Our conduct is controlled by the exigencies of the social state in which we live, and our indebtedness to society measured by the extent and character of our advancement.

The fact that men will persist in putting their judgment and individual interests against the progressive tendencies in social and industrial affairs indicates that the millenium is not yet in sight, and that war in some form will continue.

It is fair, however, to presume that if industrial contests can not be avoided, that the conscience of enlightened communities will not tolerate their prosecution by the barborous methods heretofore practised. It is generally recognized that certain rules must obtain in military warfare, and the local public, embarassed by an industrial conflict, will assert its interest at least to the extent of insisting that neither party take undue advantage. It was public considerations of this kind that censured the action of the Virden Coal Company in attempting to stockade its mine, and later, aroused indignation when a merciless mob of hired murderers, protected from possible attack, shot down law abiding citizens and unprotected workmen.

The strike at Virden demonstrated that the American wage earner will fight for his job and his home as readily and as earnestly as he will for his flag. Governor Tanner's pathetic reference to the “home” and the “village cemetery” touches this aspect of the contest. One who has devoted much time and thought to the study of social and economic questions, writing in commendation of the Governor's action in relation to the Virden strike, makes the following suggestive observation:

“It seems absurd that we should spend millions of money and the best energies of our being in training, educating and developing the children of our race, and after we have made men of them, to allow them to be supplanted or forced to accept the standard of men who are hundreds of years behind them in what we call civilization.

“It betokens an immense advance in public sentiment when the Chief Executive of the State boldly proclaims that the power of the State shall no longer be used to support measures that can ultimate in nothing but the deterioration of its citizenship.”

To foster and protect an exalted citizenship is and should be the chief concern of the State and nation, and surely he who may seem to strain the function of his office in this respect can not be justly charged with having violated any law. The action taken at Virden, so far as it invoked the exercise of the powers of the State, was but the culmination of the policy adopted by the Governor during the notable suspension of 1897, when he refused to make the State an agent in the operation of mines at a rate less than that demanded. This attitude was instrumental in securing the advance at which

work in the mines was resumed, not only in this but the other states comprising the competitive districts. Had the Governor complied with the wishes of certain employers by honoring the demands of timid sheriffs for troops, a different settlement would have been effected and one not so satisfactory to the miners. If the State had volunteered its assistance to mines attempting to operate at less than the rate demanded, it would only be a question of time when others would have followed, and a material break at any point in Illinois would force a similar settlement throughout the competitive districts.

With the exception of a few metropolitan papers, owned and controlled by corporate interests, the Governor's course has been generally endorsed. Referring to the intention of certain operators to import Chinese workmen during the suspension last year, the *Chicago Record* said:

"If the operators of the mines in the Braidwood district are seriously intending to hire Chinese labor as a means of coercing their employes into submission, it is necessary to warn them that they will be doing worse by themselves than by the miners. The American people will not stand this sort of thing.

"It is all well enough to say that corporations have the right to go to the cheapest market for their labor, that the law of supply and demand works here as elsewhere. There is a line of reasonable dealing beyond which not even a private individual may go. And a corporation, employing hundreds of men and depending upon the people for the purchase of its products, occupies a public relation which binds it still more firmly to keep within reasonable limits in making its struggle against labor.

"If the mine operators proceed to import Chinese coolies who can live on almost nothing, who do not expect to have what American citizens regard as the decencies of life, to say nothing of its comforts, who are able to 'compete' with American labor by starving it out, they must be prepared to take the consequences. They will get no sympathy from the public and they will be held responsible for whatever disasters may follow."

On the question of imported labor during the Virden and Pana contests the same paper gave expression to the following opinion:

"The employing mine owners at Pana, Ill., are bringing in negroes from the south to take the places of their striking workmen, with whom there is a dispute over the question of wages. The citizens of Pana in mass meeting Tuesday evening adopted resolutions protesting against this course on the part of the employers as tending to lower the standard of citizenship in their community.

"The protest of the citizens of Pana is well taken, not because the imported workmen are colored, but because they are low grade workmen, and the ef-

fect of their coming must be to lower the standard of citizenship and of civilization in that place. If the demands of the strikers at Pana are excessive, the operators have a right to secure other workmen. But it is a social wrong for the operators to replace one set of workmen with others of a distinctly lower grade. The citizenship of a community should be kept up to as high a standard as possible, and the efforts of those at the bottom to raise the standard by bettering their conditions are deserving of encouragement. For a part of the employers in a community deliberately to lower the standard by importing inferior workmen to take the places of those of a higher grade, without doing everything possible to come to an agreement with those who have been in their employ, is an offense against the community.

"In Pennsylvania the miners used to be high grade American workmen, who commanded fairly good wages. Every time there was a difficulty over wages or conditions of labor, foreigners were imported, and the American workmen were forced out altogether. As a result the standard of citizenship in some of the Pennsylvania mining communities has been radically lowered to the extent that those communities are not fit for self-government. The mob that was fired upon by a sheriff's posse at Lattimer some time ago was made up entirely of foreigners of this type, who had crowded out higher grade workmen, and then in turn found themselves ground down beyond the point of endurance.

"In self-governing communities the instinct of self-preservation must prompt a protest against this sort of thing. Labor troubles must be settled upon some other basis than that which results in radical lowering of the standard of citizenship by substituting an inferior for a higher grade of workmen."

The *Peoria Herald*, an influential journal, politically opposed to the Governor, was fair enough to make the following bold declaration:

"The Chicago papers that are opposed to Governor Tanner can see nothing in his recent refusal to send troops to Pana to protect the imported miners other than a bid for political favor. The Herald has opposed John R. Tanner as bitterly as any newspaper in the State. It does not pretend to analyze the motives that may have actuated him in refusing to send troops. It simply believes that he did the right thing at the right time. We are willing to leave the motives to God and his own conscience. There has been nothing that has caused more trouble in this State than the importation of labor to take the place of home labor if the miners make a demand for what is justly due them. Heretofore it has been the case that all the operators had to do was to go down south, where labor is cheaper, where the expense of living is less, and get a lot of black or white men to take their places. They have then sat back in their chairs and asked the State to run their mines for them to the extent of seeing that no trouble came of this business.

"And it has been to the shame of the State of Illinois that the State has usually consented to do this very thing.

"It is time that some Governor with the necessary courage should rise up and say that this thing must stop. It is time that the militia of the State should cease to be used as bond slaves to help perpetuate a series of outrages aimed by combined capital at home workingmen. No one pretends that the claims of the miners are not just. Competition in coal has become so keen that prices have been cut away below what they should be, and when this is done the miner is called on by the operator to shoulder the loss that comes inevitably from this fierce competition. This is not the fault of the miner and he should not be called on to suffer the loss. He is getting merely what he can live on. Anything below that places him below the horse or any part of the animal kingdom that is well kept.

"In the importations of miners that have taken place heretofore, few of the importations have remained. They have discovered that they can not live here in the north, with its five months of winter, for what they could in the sunny south, where the expenses of everything, from food down to clothing, are so much less, and they have returned. But they have stayed long enough to break the spirits of the miners who were contending for their rights, and who have been unable to bear the sight of starving wives and children. It has been but a few years since we had an illustration of this at Spring Valley.

"The Herald hopes that Governor Tanner will continue firm in refusing to use the State militia for the purpose of helping the coal operators carry out the scheme they have in view. We hope that he will continue to refuse to allow State troops to be used against Illinois workingmen so long as the property of innocent parties is not threatened. If that course results in increasing the popularity of John R. Tanner, which seems to be the dread of some of the Chicago newspapers, so much the better. It should increase his popularity. People can not help thinking well of a governor who breaks away from the old plan of furnishing aid to the plutocrats and nothing but shot and bayonets to the workingmen. There is nothing more popular—nothing that more increases the esteem in which a state official is held—than his daring to do right. And that is what Governor Tanner is doing in this instance."

Resolutions commendatory of the action taken have been passed by nearly all the labor bodies in the United States, the latest expression being that of the American Federation of Labor at its recent session at Kansas City, where delegates representing every organized craft united in an unqualified endorsement of the Governor's conduct.

The most significant expression appeared in the editorial columns of the *Coal Trade Journal* of New York. Representing principally the interests of the employers, its editor, a fearless, independent man, had the courage to write as follows:

"Governor Tanner of Illinois is being severely criticised by what is commonly termed the metropolitan press, but which should be more justly termed the 'moneyed-aristocracy press' of the country.

"The condemnation heaped upon the Governor, boiled down and crystallized, is hatred for his position as a fair man, and opposition to his method of doing justice to all men. It is such a new thing.

"Such a departure from the ordinary way of doing business by the chief executive of any state that the employers, who heretofore have, almost without exception, been able to use the militia to assist in defeating the projects and objects of the laboring people, are surprised. Workingmen have repeatedly charged that the militia were used to coerce them into obedience to the wishes of employers, and that they were used for that purpose is at present very evident from the abuse heaped upon Governor Tanner.

"If it were not so the action of the Governor in sending soldiers to preserve the peace, as he has done at Pana and Virden, would meet with approval. The attitude of the Governor towards the strikers and his instructions to the military that they were to disarm all people found with firearms in their possession, and that they were not to give countenance or encouragement to the actions of employers in their attempt to coerce their workmen nor to lend assistance to the employers in their efforts to substitute scab for union labor, has completely astonished the capitalistic interests and they fall back on the time worn cry of 'anarchist.'

"Any official who dares to do right and who dares to execute the laws impartially to all men, rich or poor, to employé as well as employer, is such a contrast from the usual run of officials, that he is regarded as a dangerous man and the eyes of all men are turned toward him.

"One thing, however, is very much in evidence in the career of Governor Tanner—that neither the gratitude of the one class nor the hatred, envy and jealousy of the other, can influence him to depart one iota from the strict line of duty impartially performed by him since the trouble began.

"The Governor has repeatedly asserted, and has reiterated his assertion, that he is opposed to the importation of labor into Illinois, giving as some of his reasons that there is labor enough, and more coming of their own volition, to perform all the work that is to be done in the State. In this position the Governor will be supported by all the right-thinking people in and out of the State.

"The cry is raised for the purpose of creating a race prejudice against the Governor, that he is an enemy to the colored man, yet no negro coming into the State of his own volition has been prohibited, and we feel safe in saying that if white labor, contracted for and imported in under the same conditions that the colored labor brought in was, that the Governor would oppose it just as much and as earnestly as he now does the colored, not because of color, but because the system is wrong, and he is opposed to Illinois being made the dumping ground for any kind of undesirable labor, be it white, black or yellow."

These opinions, it is fair to presume, merit the approbation of all men honestly and legitimately engaged in the coal industry, and

they are in strong and refreshing contrast to the obsequious sentiments expressed in certain coal journals, to which propriety in this connection forbids even a reference.

Public feeling is so strong in favor of this new departure in wage contests that the precedent established by the present Executive of this State will, with or without special legislation, become the recognized policy. Congressional enactment now makes it unlawful to import, under contract, labor from foreign countries; the same principle applied between the states will confine the wage controversies of the future to native or resident labor, and encourages the hope that the day is not far distant when the military power of state governments will no longer be used for the unholy purpose of oppressing honest toil. Should this consummation be realized, then, in the interest of generations to come, the lives sacrificed in the battle at Virden may in some measure be atoned.

The lockout at Virden commenced on the 1st day of April, 1898, and continued until the 15th day of November. During all those months the officials of the company declared their inability to operate and comply with the scale. The settlement ultimately effected utterly destroyed all these contentions.

The agreement signed on the 15th day of November by the officials of the company and the miners' organization stipulated that the union would be recognized; that all the former workmen would be re-employed without discrimination; that the scale price of 40 cents per ton would be paid, and that the services of the superintendent, engineers and mine managers who had taken an obnoxious part in the contest, be dispensed with, and others satisfactory to the miners substituted.

It is not on record where a corporation made such a complete and seemingly humiliating surrender to the claims of its employés. The presumption is that the company could more readily afford to comply with the demands of the miners at the commencement than after the losses sustained in consequence of a seven months' suspension. The situation at Pana, so far as it affects the union, remains practically the same, except the increased power of the organization to continue the contest. The conduct of the mine owners there, like that at Virden, is without excuse or justification. Their stubborn policy has seriously impaired the interests of the city and almost destroyed its reputation.

Viewed from a strictly business standpoint, it would have cost less for the people of the State to have appropriated from the public funds a sum equal to the aggregate earnings of the Pana miners for the past year. Unless speedily adjusted, the Pana difficulty will cost the people of Christian county and the State, for the hire of special deputy sheriffs and militia companies, an amount equal to, if it does not exceed, what the miners would have earned.

Thinking people must conclude that this is altogether too high a price to pay for the privilege of witnessing a few coal companies outraging the good sense of a community and defying the laws of the State.