

Nov. 24, 1919.

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Chicago

LABOR CONDITIONS

A meeting of the Harlan County Operators' Association was held in Harlan Thursday, Nov. 20th. It was decided at this meeting that the Harlan operators would wait a few days to see what developed at Washington, however upon adjourning and before I left Harlan a message was received from Mr. Clayton, the Secretary, who has been at Washington keeping in touch with the situation, stating that the operators had offered 15¢ per ton advance and a 20% advance on day labor. Mr. Tway, the President of the Association, got in telephone communication with Mr. Mahan of Knoxville and Mr. Mahan stated that he had received a message from Mr. Kellar, President of the 19th district, united mine workers, asking, that providing an agreement was reached at Washington, if the operators of the Appalachian district would meet the united mine workers to negotiate a wage agreement. It was decided that in view of the critical situation a meeting of the policy committee of the Harlan Association as well as the Appalachian Association would be held in Knoxville Saturday morning. Some of the operators in the Appalachian field, especially the President of the Appalachian Association, Mr. Boyd, were in favor of answering Mr. Kellar's telegram and meeting the united mine workers in joint conference. The Policy Committee of the Harlan Association insisted on my accompanying them to Knoxville hoping that I would be able to bring some pressure to bear on a few of the Knoxville members who were inclined to recognize the united mine workers. We arrived in Knoxville at six o'clock Saturday morning and had a meeting with the joint committees at eight o'clock.

While this conference was being held another telegram was received stating that the miners had turned the operators' proposition down and that Wm. Wilson had submitted another one proposing an increase of about 32% on the wages and 27¢ per ton on mining. Also there was a message received from Mr. T. L. Lewis, former president of the united mine workers and now secretary of the New River Operators' Association of West Va., stating that in view of the fact that the miners had broken an agreement signed by the New River Association and the united mine workers the operators in the New River district were now working non-union and refusing to collect the check off and that the district was working 85% of normal. Another message was received Saturday morning stating that Mr. Kellar of the united mine workers had wired Mr. Turnblazer, National Board Member of the united mine workers, to send out notices instructing the miners in the Appalachian district to return to work Monday morning, this notice to have the official seal of the united mine workers. Mr. Turnblazer carried out the instructions from Kellar and during the day a number of operators were notified by the president of their local unions that they were ready to go to work Monday morning providing the operators signed the united mine workers' agreement recognizing the union with the deduction of the check off and closed shop.