

UNITED MINE WORKERS OF AMERICA
NEWS BUREAU
UMWA BUILDING
WASHINGTON 5, D. C.

PROPERTY OF INSTITUTE
OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
214 CALIFORNIA HALL

Washington, D. C., June 7, 1948. -- John L. Lewis, President of the United Mine Workers of America, today made the following comments when negotiations for a new bituminous contract were resumed in the Statler Hotel on the order of the Federal District Court. The Union had been ordered to meet with Joseph E. Moody, President of the Southern Coal Producers Association.

"We attend this conference only through duress. The intemperate judicial sanctions imposed upon us were uttered upon the premise of an oppressive and iniquitous statute. This statute constitutes the first major thrust of fascist tyranny in the republic.

"As representatives of labor, we sit here under attainder; in reverse, your limbs are unshackled. You have no fear of the thought police, and when annoyed by our conduct, you can at will invoke additional processes of Government to dragoon us. Free collective bargaining? You have reduced the words to mockery.

"We have at present no wage proposals. Assuredly the Mineworkers expect improvements. You and your industry are magnificently opulent. Your 1946 profits were without parallel. In 1947 you increased them twice and even thrice. In recent months you have levied additional heavy increases upon each ton of coal sold. You are digging deep and without restraint into the national purse. From time to time you raise outcries against the men who mine your coal; and while the gullible public is bewildered by your outcries, you pluck more doubloons from the consumers of coal. In this fashion and with hardened conscience you have become the most corpulent of our native fat cats.

"We assume that you would deplore any impairment of your abnormal income after July 1. Such an assumption would seem to be a logical predicate for the making of a new wage agreement before that date. Under such circumstances, the Mineworkers will be glad to consider any offer affecting the terms of a possible new contract which you may persuade yourselves to utter. Just in passing, may we suggest that as a condition precedent to a new contract, the Mineworkers will expect guarantees incident to the honoring of the current agreement in the matter of its welfare provisions. ♦

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