

Big Lobby Fights Against Coal Bills

A Washington dispatch to the New York Times, dated June 26, says: The charge that the National Coal association, representing the bituminous industry, the Anthracite Coal Operators association, the American Wholesale association, the National Retail Coal Merchants association and various state and regional coal organizations have united in "one big union" to defeat pending legislation for the regulation of the coal industry, was made public today by Senator Frelinghuysen of New Jersey.

The purpose of the "one big union," Senator Frelinghuysen asserted, is "to continue the stranglehold on the necks and purses of the coal buyers" of the country.

There are two coal bills now before the Senate, of which Senator Frelinghuysen is the author. One bill gives the Interstate Commerce Commission authority to make seasonal rates for the purpose of encouraging early buying, as well as lessening the price of coal, while the other bill gives the government the power to compel publicity of all facts connected with the coal business which are considered to be in the public interest.

Senator Frelinghuysen now declares that these coal organizations, representing hundreds of millions of dollars of capital, are bombarding congress, with literary fusillades, which contain, as he expressed it, "an atom of fact and a ton of misrepresentation."

"For the last week," said Senator Frelinghuysen today, "two coal bills introduced by me have been before the Senate. They will again come up for consideration tomorrow. As this is a supremely important question involving the happiness, the health, indeed, the very life of the public, the country should understand what this fight means. If these bills are defeated, tragedy next fall and winter, in the nature of a coal famine, worse than ever experienced before, is inevitable. The fact is, owing to existing conditions, I doubt if the tragedy can be averted. But we can prevent a second tragedy a year later.

"FUSILLADES" ON CONGRESSMEN

"There are four nationwide organizations of coal men. First, there is the National Coal association confined to the bituminous trade, with elaborate headquarters in Washington. Then comes the Anthracite Coal Operators' association, located in Philadelphia. Next is the American Wholesale Coal association, with extensive offices at the capital. Then we have the National Retail Coal Merchants' Association, operating from Philadelphia. Then there are many state and regional organizations.

"For the purpose of defeating the pending and all other coal legislation these various bodies, representing hundreds of millions of dollars of capital, have united in one big union, so to speak, to continue their stranglehold on the necks and purses of the coal buyers.

"During the last two weeks, since the recent conference of Secretary Hoover and Secretary Fall, the junior senator from New York, myself and other officials anxiously seeking a solution of the coal problem, these combined organizations have unmasked their batteries and are attacking with a violence almost unprecedented the very practical piece of legislation now before the Senate. Every senator and every representative has been subjected to voluminous literary fusillades, each containing an atom of fact and a ton of misrepresentation. Indeed, the whole purpose of this coal lobby is to throw dust in the eyes of the Senate and the public. This it can do only by misstatements and misquotations.

"There is not a scintilla of truth in certain of the allegations of these men. The charge that this legislation in the faintest degree aims at government operation or control is a delusion and a fraud. I am opposed, as I have heretofore said, to legislation of that scope and never will agree to it, unless these men, by their obstructive tactics, make it imperatively necessary. The sole purpose of this bill is to establish complete and prompt publicity in the departments of Secretary Hoover and Secretary Fall with regard to production, stocks, storage and prices at the mines, in transit and in the final retail market.

"The operators have always claimed that it was not they who got the big profits. They have contended that their own profits were normal and reasonable. My own inclination has

been to agree with them, to a considerable extent at least. Now, however, in view of their present crusade of misrepresentation concerning the real purpose of the legislation and the real purpose of myself and those who have aided in shaping these bills I am disposed to believe they have never been sincere and have never told the truth regarding the operators' profits. If they resort to deceit in one particular they will do likewise in another.

"As an illustration of the grotesquely inaccurate and misleading nature of this propaganda of the coal people, take this hectic fulmination of the American Wholesale Coal association: 'We need not be blind to the plight of the nation which surrenders to Bolshevism. We have but to study Russia.' Imagine such a diatribe, simply because we are trying to organize a bureau, not to operate mines, but to collect statistical figures.

"This same body flippantly alludes to those who stand for legislation protecting the public from further highway robbery in this coal business as a 'small group of senators.' God forbid that the time shall ever arrive when the membership of this body inclined to oppose the plans and purpose of lobbyists of this bombastes furioso type in the interests of the public welfare shall become 'a small group of senators.'

"I am opposed to the attempt to kill this legislation by sending it back to the committee. We have devoted nearly two years to our work of investigation. We have held many meetings and heard practically all interests. The public is tired of investigations. If further inquiries are made let them be made by government officials authorized to act under the provisions of this legislation, duly enacted into law. The public wants action. It demands results.

"If these high salaried lobbyists, now fighting in the last ditch, defeat this bill or even postpone it, then the deluge may come to them sooner than they think. The public is long suffering, but it will not suffer forever.

"I say to these men, if they succeed in their present purpose through the propaganda they have inaugurated a future congress will not treat them with the same degree of leniency that characterizes the measure introduced by me. An outraged public will demand more drastic legislation."

Concerning Senator Frelinghuysen's statements generally, an officer of the National Coal association said:

"The National Coal association has through its representatives, expressed its entire willingness to submit to the government through Sec'y Hoover or any other official, all statistics and data relating to the production, cost and sales prices relating to the production of bituminous coal. This willingness has been imparted to Secretary Hoover, Secretary Fall and other government officials. The bituminous coal industry is anxious for the people to know the exact facts as to the production of coal.

"We are in entire sympathy with any move by which the government may ascertain the facts as to the industry, but under the Frelinghuysen stabilization bill the method of ascertaining information is not consistent with the liberty which private business ordinarily expects. The Frelinghuysen stabilization bill goes much further than the mere submitting of statistics. In effect it would enable the government to regulate the very industry itself. It would be, according to the admissions of senators who are supporting the bill, the opening wedge of government control over the industry.

"The bituminous coal industry is concerned only in seeing that the public has its coal. No further legislation is necessary to accomplish this."

THE SACRIFICIAL POLITICIANS

A very interesting contribution to the political history of the state would be furnished if Arthur Mullen and Senator Hitchcock and a few others who are constantly being held up to as having sacrificed much for Mr. Bryan only to be scorned by him when they sought office at his hands would take the time to set down in black and white just what those sacrifices consisted of and when and where they were performed. Men who think they have a thoroughly familiar acquaintance with Nebraska politics have a very firm conviction that if it hadn't been for Bryan's long time prominence in Democratic politics

most of these gentlemen who pose as victims of this Moloch would have been little heard of. We may ascribe to them the highest qualities of head and heart that their friends may claim for them, but Bryan, by his ability to gather the radicals and progressives of the state under one banner for a number of years, made it possible for them to reap whatever glory and office they have secured. Before his advent the Democratic party of the state played second fiddle in every election. Its leadership was made up of men who derived their principal power from the same source as the Republicans, the general offices of the railroads, and they won no offices or victories. Bryan opened the door of office to many Democrats in the state, and he was the peerless leader until he went dry. Then the Mullens and Hitchcocks, following the political spoor of the breweries and uniting with them on a well understood contract of quid pro quo, opened up another era of office to their kind of Democrats.—Lincoln, Nebraska, State Journal (Republican).

MR. BRYAN IN NEW YORK

(Utica Press, June 27.)

Invited to this city by the Y. M. C. A., and introduced by Robert D. Fraser as a "statesman, scholar and Christian gentleman," William Jennings Bryan addressed an audience in the Central M. E. church last evening.

The subject of his address was "Where Are the Nine?" From this biblical passage, relating to the story of the 10 lepers who were healed by Christ, the nine of whom slunk away without a word of thanks, the speaker drew the lesson of the lack of appreciation which is such a predominating characteristic of the peoples of today.

The main things the famous statesman advocated, the national and international reforms he expressed himself unqualifiedly in favor of are:

The education of every child in the whole world;

A more vital appreciation of the church and its work in developing larger hearts and bigger consciences;

The adoption of the Bible plan of universal brotherhood;

An intelligent appreciation of the measure of reward according to God's law;

Disarmament and prohibition in every Christian country in the world.

One can very readily see that the platform speaker of 40 years' experience and 61 years of activity is still the same generous hearted, big souled idealist; firm in his convictions and sincere in his expressions.

It is almost an impossibility to pack the thoughts voiced in a newspaper article. They came upon his audience too rapidly. The average mind can carry away only the precious fragments of the discussion.

Bryan in his very first utterances endorsed the work of the Y. M. C. A. and all the other institutions which give the world its spiritual enthusiasm, for Bryan is first and foremost a Christian who is not afraid to praise the Bible publicly and recommend its use generally. It is perhaps the very spring of his power, his hidden fountain of inspiration.

Last night he appeared to be in almost as good physical, mental and vocal condition despite the intervening years of almost constant talking to people aggregating millions. He is older—which he can not help—but he is still vigorous and when he warmed up to his subject there was the old time fire and force which with his wonderful flow of words have made him famous. In his introduction last evening he said that in political campaigns the differences of opinion are discussed but these are in a sense on the surface and superficial. There are other and more vital questions upon which we can all agree and which ought to be more carefully studied and generally understood. Mr. Bryan finds most of his themes for popular lectures in the Bible and this was no exception. He is essentially a religious man and has had a mighty influence on the right side of these and moral questions. In his last night's lecture it was not so much new ideas presented as it was entertainingly bringing to mind what his hearers knew but never had thought of in just the right light and whose bearing had not been fully appreciated. It has been thrice proven that most men do not agree with Mr. Bryan in politics but all the same the overwhelming majority of his countrymen recognize his ability, applaud his integrity, approve his influence as a citizen and admire him as a sterling and representative American.