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Hungarians Successfully Conduct Co-operative Mine In Kentucky, Having Two Million Dollars Invested

Bridge Had to Be Built Over Tug River—Coal Is Dumped Inside Mine and Is Brought Out by Conveyor—Employee-Shareholders Unanimously Accept 30 Per Cent Wage Reduction

BY J. R. HAWORTH
Huntington, W. Va.

ORGANIZERS, officers, directors and employees of the Himler Coal Co., operating in Martin County, Kentucky, agree with one voice that that company has solved the labor problem. With the coal-producing industry distraught in its struggle for years with this question, with this plan and that expedient, this theory and that system attempted and abandoned as impractical and unavailing one after the other in an impressive array of failures in final solution of the labor question, the cheerful pronouncement of the Himler company that the answer has been found is intriguing, at least.

The company claims for itself the distinction of being the only co-operative coal-mining company in America. To prove that the company has solved its labor difficulties it points to its history covering a period of two years, and recites the difficulties already overcome.

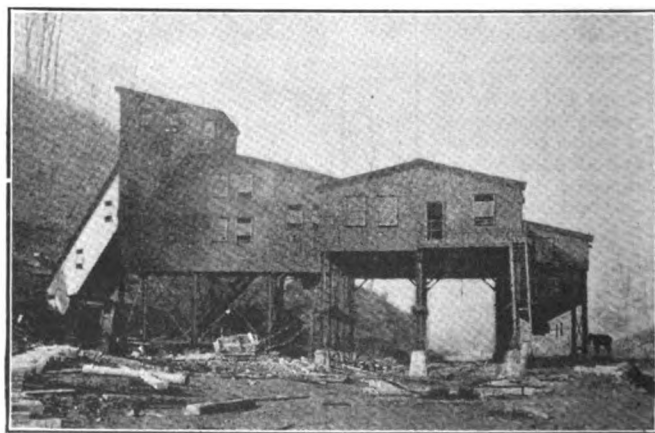
STOCKHOLDERS VOTE FOR LOWER WAGE SCALE

The history of industry is littered with the wreckage of co-operative schemes of various sorts which have failed and have been forgotten. Yet the Himler plan, its sponsors say, has been a success for two years—a recent stockholders' meeting, in fact, voted unanimously for a 30-per-cent reduction in wages following submission of a report of the treasurer, and the company continues not only to mine coal at the low market price but has increased its capital to \$2,000,000 for extension of its operations.

Few less promising places in the United States could

be found at this time for an experiment in labor problems than Himlerville, Ky., the home of the Himler Coal Co. Himlerville is being built in the hollow formed by Buck Creek, which flows into Tug River at Warfield, Ky., about two miles from Himlerville. Warfield is a village on Tug River opposite Kermit, W. Va., and Kermit is on the selvage of the Williamson coal field, about twenty miles from the town of Williamson itself.

There are windows in the village of Kermit shattered from recent volleys from the hills on the opposite side of Tug River, a phase of the fierce industrial struggle which has torn the Williamson field for the past two



HIMLER COAL CO. TIPPLE WITH ITS 45-DEG. SLOPE

This shows the tippie before it was entirely completed. The slope is so steep and short as to be what our metal-mining brethren would call an inclined shaft.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE HIMLER COAL CO.

The president, Martin Himler, is the third from the right in the rear row. He has a black tie and white shirt. Martin Himler as editor of a Hungarian newspaper in New York, the *Magyar Munkáslap*, was greatly attracted by mining men, capitalist and mine worker alike, and was much interested in the efforts of his fellow countrymen to better their condition. This experiment in co-operative mining is the result.

years. In the intense fight for unionization on the one hand and resistance to unionization on the other, the Himler operation has been untroubled. The story is not uninteresting.

A little more than two years ago Martin Himler, a naturalized Hungarian, conceived the plan of organizing a co-operative coal-mining company. Following up this idea, he formed the Himler Coal Co., capitalized at \$50,000. Stock was sold to men of his own native land. A small mine in Mingo County, West Virginia, was purchased, and operations were begun. The mine had been a failure for previous owners. The seam was thin and working conditions were difficult. Yet the new company, employing its own stockholders, made money from it, and ultimately sold it at a profit.

Seeking larger fields, the company invaded Martin County, Kentucky. That county therefore had been a veritable wilderness. Tug River blocks its only outlet to a railroad. The obvious thing to do was to bridge the river. The new co-operative company, the laughing stock of coal operators throughout the Williamson field, faced its problems with optimism. A reorganization increased the capital stock of the company from \$50,000 to \$500,000, and the new stock was promptly subscribed by nearly fifteen hundred stockholders in the United States and in Europe.

A tract of approximately twelve hundred acres, in

which lay the Warfield, or No. 2 gas, seam was under lease. An opening was started; contracts were let for erection of forty-five houses; attention was turned to bridging the river. Difficulties encountered in this project included the discovery of beds of quicksand where solid rock should have been. The original estimated cost of the bridge was \$25,000. The structure was finally completed at a total cost of about \$300,000. First shipments of coal were hauled over the new structure on July 1.

Meanwhile the new tippie was being built. Erected by the Link-Belt Co., it contains novel features, among these being the installation of a scraper-type conveyor running on a 45-deg. slope to the loading pit in the mine entry. The company declares no other successful installation of a scraper-type conveyor has yet been made on such a steep slope.

The novel features, however, are not confined to the physical equipment of the company. Its organization is unique.

STOCKHOLDERS ALL CITIZENS OR NATURALIZED

Stock in the company is sold only to Hungarians, native or naturalized. One of the bylaws of the company provides, however, that no stockholder may seek employment with the company until he has undertaken naturalization as an American citizen. According to Martin Himler, president of the company, no stockholder in the company has yet arrived in America without a firm resolution to become an American citizen as promptly as the laws will permit.

Employment by the company is not limited to stockholders, but the non-stock-holding employees must not exceed one-third the number of stockholding employees. The employment of non-stockholding employees, Himler explains, has been agreed upon by the company to take care of the resident labor.

A portion of the work of the company is devoted to Americanization, and to this end a night school has been established with a competent instructor in which the English language and the theory of American government, with a study of the Constitution of the United States, are taught employees of the company.

Himler's rules of conduct are strict, and in these his hands are upheld by his associates. On a recent tour of the property of the company, two employees were found "shooting craps." The men were promptly discharged and their stock purchased by the company. On a subsequent tour an employee who owned a small store



Stockholders' Meeting

Martin Himler in a miner's cap explaining the \$1,000 insurance policies being distributed among the workmen. Eugen Lang, the secretary, the man on the extreme left in the preceding figure, may be seen in this illustration behind and on the left hand of Mr. Himler, policies in hand. Nearly every other man is a coal miner-stockholder.

on the company's land was found to have in his possession certain jars of contraband whiskey. He was discharged from the employ of the company, required to leave the neighborhood, and his store and home were purchased by the company and resold.

The company declares its plans for the company town will be a model for mining towns in America. The houses will be so constructed as to avoid the appearance of sameness, and hot and cold running water, sanitary plumbing of modern design and electric wiring are being provided for in each. In each deed or contract for a company house the owner or lessor is required to maintain flower and vegetable gardens.

At the annual meeting of stockholders the entire directorate, with one exception, was re-elected to office. The vote is regarded by the directors as an expression of approval and confidence. With the increased capitalization, arrangements for new mine openings and new tipples will be made promptly, the directors say, and the policy of the company in Americanization, education and production of coal at whatever price the market may dictate will be continued.

PLANS MADE FOR SOME ROOMS 60 FT. WIDE

The company mines the Warfield, or No. 2 gas, seam, running from 4½ to 5½ ft., fairly level, with an excellent sandstone roof and fireclay floor. Some difficulty is encountered in keeping the rooms dry. Entering by a 45-deg. slope, lined on floor and walls with concrete, a descent of about 60 ft. is made to the loading point. The cars arrive from the mine workings linked by swivel couplings and hauled by storage-battery locomotives. These latter will be used for main-haulage purposes until the territory opened makes it advisable to use trolley locomotives, when the storage-battery machines will be used for gathering purposes. The coal is dumped on a rotary dump in a hopper, where it is automatically weighed. Thence it falls into a bin 40 ft. deep with a storage capacity of twenty-five tons. Here it is fed to a scraper conveyor which raises it to the tipple, where it screens to 50 per cent lump, 20 per cent nut and egg and 30 per cent slack. Because of the excellence of the roof, the engineers' layouts for future development provide for some rooms 60 ft. wide.

Himler, president of the company, takes a fatherly interest in his men. "If the mine profits, the profit will go to the men," he says. "No employee wastes a penny's worth of material, and none will steal from the company either in money, material or time.

"I think we have found the cure for radicalism, for bolshevism, for Marxism. We have opened the way for the miner to become a mine owner himself, and I am confident that this will soon be true in every industry. I do not see how it is possible now to fail. I cannot see how any benefit can come from an everlasting struggle between labor and capital, nor can I see the necessity for such a fight.

"With our present limited resources the company is now sending two boys to college. One of these was a coal miner until he was eighteen years old. He will be graduated from Columbia University in two years. As our company grows we hope to have fifty boys in college all the time. I believe in my plan. I believe in America; we cannot fail."

IN A RECENT SIGNED ARTICLE in the *Washington Herald*, Representative Florian Lampert, of Wisconsin, advocated government ownership of coal mines.

Plant to Prepare Small-Size Locomotive Fuel and Coal for Domestic Purposes

BY C. M. SCHLOSS
Denver, Col.

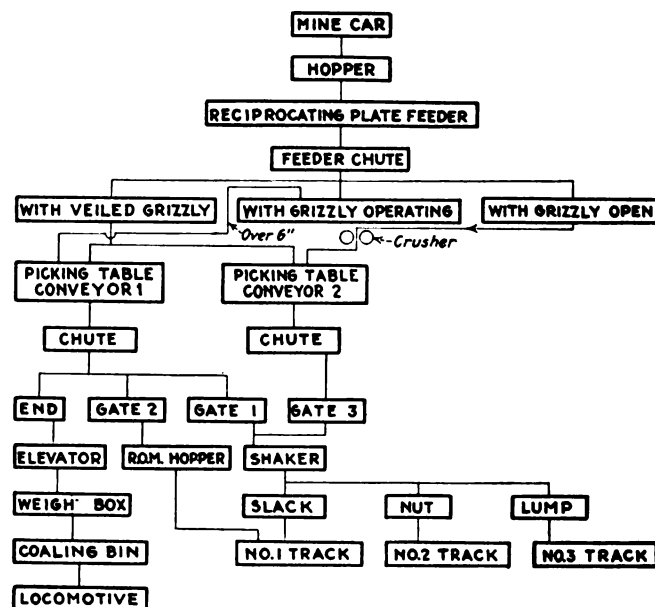
THOSE who visit the tipple of the Merkle Coal Co., at Belt, Mont., almost invariably are impressed with the small size yet great efficiency and adaptability of the screening plant there installed. Versatility is not altogether uncommon in large tipples, but small ones possessing this characteristic are rare. The installation at Belt belongs to this latter class.

When decision was made to make this installation, a tipple salesman, not himself an experienced designer, was called into consultation. To him the president and general manager of the coal company explained what was to be accomplished, insisting that merely a "simple little tipple" was all that was desired.

Design of this "simple little tipple" at first appeared impossible. In due time, however, it was accomplished, and the resulting plant is not as complicated as it looks. As may be seen in the accompanying illustration, pit cars are discharged by a kickback or goose-neck dump into a hopper from which the coal is fed uniformly by a reciprocating plate feeder to a chute containing a grizzly. The bars of this screen are spaced 6 in. apart. The grizzly is hinged so that it may be raised, letting the coal go through unscreened. Hinged veil plates also are provided to cover the grizzly when desired.

From the feeder chute, coal can be discharged to either the far side—No. 2—of a 60-in. double picking-table conveyor or onto both sides. The near side—No. 1—of this picking table discharges into a chute equipped with two flygates in series; one opens to the shaker screen and the other to the run-of-mine hopper; the end of the chute discharges to the elevator mentioned later. The far side—No. 2—of the picking table discharges over a third flygate opening to the screen. The elevator previously mentioned raises the locomotive coal and discharges it into a 3-ton weigh box, which in turn delivers to the coaling bin.

When it is desired to load picked run-of-mine on the



FLOW SHEET OF MERKLE TIPPLE

The Merkle tipple is one of the few bituminous coal tipples that crushes its product, in this case for locomotive use. Note the use of the grizzly or stationary screen, which in this case is used only for the larger coal.