

cargo case and the allegation that Senator Reed has frequently demanded representation for Pennsylvania interests on the Commission.

In a sense, the opposition is led by Senators from States in the Southern coal field, though Western Senators, too, have been active. One of the regrettable incidents resulted from that activity. Senator Steck, of Iowa, charged that Colonel Smith W. Brookhart, Senator-elect from Iowa, was lobbying for the confirmation of Woods's nomination. He intimated that Brookhart was paying a debt to Senator Reed, of Pennsylvania, who supported Brookhart in the contest for the seat which Steck now occupies. No evidence was found in support of the charge, and, after investigation by the Senate Committee on Inter-State Commerce, Senator Steck withdrew it.

What About the Next Coal Strike?

IF there is never another coal miners' strike, the recent action of the House Inter-State Commerce Committee in refusing to report the Parker Bill will have no evil results. If there ever is another coal strike—and he is an extreme optimist who believes that the old, deep-seated animosities between operators and miners have been permanently composed—the action of the Committee will have the evil effect of leaving the Government as powerless as it has been in the past to do anything effective toward protecting the public interest.

It is true that the Parker Bill, so called, may not have been the best possible bill. But it was the best that the Inter-State Commerce Committee of the House could do toward making a good bill. It was, in fact, a committee bill rather than an individual's bill. It was a composite, containing features of various bills that were introduced. Drafted by the Committee, it took the name of the chairman.

And this bill would, if it failed to do enough, at least have done something. It would have given the President authority to declare an emergency after a strike had been in progress for thirty days. It would have given the Inter-State Commerce Commission authority to establish, under strike conditions, priorities in shipments of coal. It is difficult to understand why the Committee, after patching this bill together as the best it could offer, should vote to let it suffocate in a pigeonhole. Some fear was expressed that passage of the bill would encourage attempts at Government regulation of other businesses.

The action of this Committee does not, of course, exclude the possibility of coal-strike legislation at this session.

The Senate might pass a bill and send it to the House. Or the House might force the Parker Bill out of committee. The probability of either action, however, appears remote. The next miners' strike will probably find us as completely unprepared as we were when the last one came.

Another Railroad Merger

Two Northwestern railroads, the Northern Pacific and the Great Northern, have made an active contribution to the discussion of an impending legislative problem: Shall railroads merge as they themselves plan or as the Inter-State Commerce Commission suggests? A committee representing the two roads has announced its intention of petitioning the Commission for permission to unite the two systems; and it also has inferentially admitted that the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy system will eventually be a factor in the merger. On the other hand, the principal opposition expected from the Commission is on the ground that this merger would disarrange the tentative groupings the Commission has made—the Northern Pacific with the Burlington, and the Great Northern with the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul—and that the railroads' proposal would leave the St. Paul ungrouped.

The three roads which want to merge are the "Hill roads," which James J. Hill controlled and tried unsuccessfully—because of contemporary anti-trust provisions—to merge in 1904. The Great Northern and the Northern Pacific are parallel transcontinental lines, which, however, both enter Chicago from Minneapolis by the Burlington tracks and use certain other trackage in common. For transcontinental business, especially freight, they are strongly competitive; but the bulk of the local business of the Great Northern is in the eastern part of these railroads' Minnesota-North Dakota-Montana-Washington territory, whereas most of the Northern Pacific's local branch lines are in the west of that region. Although, since the death of James J. Hill, the ownership of the roads has been divided, large blocks of stocks in both companies are owned in common, and both companies jointly own the preponderance of the stock of the Burlington. Even without merging, the Burlington gives the two northern roads access to Denver, Lincoln, St. Louis, Kansas City, and Fort Worth.

Expert transportation opinion consulted by The Outlook indicates that, on the basis of the present meager announcement, the merger proposal is logical and sound and that the resulting

system—which, including the Burlington, would be larger than the two Canadian railway systems, and which, even without the Burlington, would be larger than the Southern Pacific, the present largest-mileage road in the United States—would not be so unduly large as to be against the public interest. Every consolidation proposal entails some limitation of competition; but the degree in this case would not be beyond the control of public regulation; and, furthermore, competition at many points would be continued by the St. Paul, the Union Pacific, and the Santa Fe Line. Contrary to weakening the service of the Northern Pacific and the Great Northern by decreasing their competition, the merger should strengthen railroad service in the Northwest by sharing the strength of the Burlington with the two northern "Hill roads," thus making a better-balanced and stronger whole. Whether or not even more efficient operation and greater general stability might be expected from the original Inter-State Commerce Commission plan to include the St. Paul is another question—and one which defines sharply the issue, eventually to be decided by Congress, between Government initiative and railroad initiative for mergers.

A Startling Accusation to Be Sifted

HEADLINES such as "Reds Paid Police Graft, says A. F. L.," and statements that William Green, President of the American Federation of Labor, has brought charges that during the furriers' strike in New York City not long ago the furriers' union, after coming under control of Communist leaders, had spent a large sum, put at between \$50,000 and \$100,000, much of it paid "for protection" to policemen and officials, entirely misrepresent the facts. What has happened is that a committee of the Federation has been investigating the expenditure of money in that strike and has placed the record of its hearing in the hands of President Green, and that the Federation's Executive Council has authorized him to take the matter up with the New York city officials. Mr. Green and Joseph Ryan, President of the Central Trades and Labor Council of New York, have joined in disclaiming responsibility for the charges. It would be quite wrong and unjust to give credence to the sensational allegations that have got into press despatches. A thorough investigation of the matter will take place.

It is well known that the Federation of Labor is as a body and in large majority opposed to Communist doctrine and that it fights that influence with

The organs of our own power

(Measure for Measure, Act I, Scene 1)

Alley in the Memphis Commercial Appeal



The procession turned off somewhere!

From Miss Nannie H. Rice, A. & M. College, Miss.

North in the Washington Post



He should have a 5-5-3-man-sized navy

From Cyrus A. Smale, Washington, D. C.

James in the St. Louis Star



"You've no business interfering"

From Anna Brightman, St. Louis, Mo.

Kirby in the New York World



"I claim as much right to recognize a government as you"

From Arthur Phillips, Leonia, N. J.