

Mines in Kansas shall not close Capper declares

With war waging in Europe and coal being rationed, Governor Capper initiates a probe of the coal operating companies books. "The people must have coal and they are going to have it as long as it is in the ground and can be mined". That was the essence of Governor Capper's statement to reporters on August 23, 1917. Price negotiations had been made in some parts of the country but the governor argues that prices had not been negotiated for states west of the Mississippi and the public is being charged the highest prices while coal companies profit.

Creator: Topeka Capital

Date: August 23, 1917

Callnumber: K 622 Clipp v.1 1911 - 1971 p. 68,69

KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 212658

Item Identifier: 212658

www.kansasmemory.org/item/212658

KANSAS
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

Mines in Kansas shall not close Capper declares

Topeka Capital
Aug. 23 1917.

MINES IN KANSAS SHALL NOT CLOSE CAPPER DECLARES

Coal Operators Can't Bluff Federal and State Government by Threats of Refusing to Meet Fixed Price.

THE PEOPLE MUST HAVE COAL

Producers Face Serious Trouble if They Attempt to Defeat Government Regulation, Governor Says.

The coal mines in Kansas will not be closed. The operators will not bluff the federal and state government. If any effort is made, as threats of operators would indicate, to defeat or annul the orders of the president in fixing the price of coal in Kansas, the operators will be up against more trouble than they have ever faced before. The people must have coal, and they are going to have it as long as it is in the ground and can be mined.

That was the essence of Governor Capper's reply to the threat of the Kansas coal operators to close down their mines if the schedule for Kansas, as fixed by the federal government, stands. In an interview yesterday, Governor Capper said:

Means \$6 a Ton in Topeka.

"The government rate at the mines means an 80 cent reduction on lump coal, which is used principally by the consumers of this state. This coal is now selling at \$3.50 at the mines and

at \$6.75 in Topeka. The government rate would mean \$5.95 or \$6 in Topeka. But if retailers seek to absorb this reduction at the mines, there will be trouble."

The governor said he did not anticipate heavy reductions to consumers beyond the reduction in prices at the mines. With information gathered at the hearings in Topeka this week Governor Capper was confident the state and government would be able to resist any effort to advance coal rates. On the other hand, a saving of 75 to 80 cents a ton will be made to the consumer, he said.

Coal Men Must Obey.

"Rates simply can't be higher and the coal men must obey the demands of the government," said Governor Capper. "I don't view the threats to shut mines as anything serious. We will see that mines are operated in Kansas. And that means all mines, including those in the Osage field. We will watch the coal production and the car shortage problem and will insist that Kansas receive her share of the output. The state has power to enforce a square deal and for getting her share of the production. The government order, even tho orders are not made affecting retailers, will mean a reduction in present prices and assurances that prices cannot go higher."

Willing to Turn Over Output.

T. E. Williams, one of the largest coal operators in the southwest, with headquarters at Springfield, Mo., wired Governor Capper yesterday that he was willing to turn his entire business over to him to be handled at a very nominal profit, if the governor so desired.

Mr. Williams wired Governor Capper because he had for three months urged action by the president that would secure for the people cheaper coal. In his telegram to Governor Capper, Mr. Williams said:

"As the principal business of America now is war, we have placed our business on a war footing. We are now ready and willing to turn our coal business over to you on forty-eight hours' notice to serve our customers and the public of Springfield, under your instructions or direction at cost, plus a small, reasonable profit. We are still equipped to handle a large volume of retail coal business. Wire us your wishes. We are with you in your fight for a fair and reasonable price for coal for the public use. There are no times for the handling of such affairs with kid gloves."

In his reply to Mr. Williams, Governor Capper said that now that

Mines in Kansas shall not close Capper declares

