

PUBLIC PROVES ABILITY TO RUN UTILITIES WELL

Depression Has Been Spur
to Municipal Ownership,
Says League Head.

Following is the second of two articles
on Carl D. Thompson's belief that the
depression has proved public ownership
of utilities more desirable than private
ownership.

BY HAROLD E. RAINVILLE

United Press Staff Correspondent
CHICAGO, April 5.—Graft in
politics is the greatest obstacle to
overcome in successful operation of
public owned utilities, believes Carl
D. Thompson, secretary of the
Public Ownership League of Ameri-
ca.

"And the present depression has
done more than any other one thing
to eliminate such grafting," Thompson
told the United Press in explaining
why he thinks there is a
"silver lining" inside the clouds that
overhang the world of finance.

"This depression," he continued,
"has made Americans civic con-
scious. With one city after another
tottering on the brink of bank-
ruptcy, people have been made to
realize their position."

Movement Gains Impetus

"They are beginning to learn that
they must abandon the theory of
every man for himself. They are
finding out they must have hon-
esty in office."

This arousing of social interest
and "civic consciousness" Thompson
characterized as the greatest step
ever made toward clearing the way
for successful operation of public
utilities.

It is one of the two ways the de-
pression has helped the cause of this
organization, Thompson said. The
other was by proving that even in a
time of general depression public
utilities could operate at a profit.

While many privately owned util-
ity companies suffered severely,
public owned utilities everywhere
have operated "very much as usual,"
he said.

Public Capable Manager

In many cases, he said, the util-
ties not only have "kept even," but
have earned enough to shoulder the
extra burdens of unemployment and
increased taxes. Sixty-five towns
have eliminated taxes by making
power plants or water works pay city
expenses.

At the same time, he said, the
privately owned utilities have been
able to charge lower rates than those
privately owned.

"Flood control, domestic water
supply, irrigation, electric power,
transportation, gas—all can be had
with municipally owned utilities at a
much cheaper rate than from pri-
vate companies," he said.

ORATORICAL CONTEST TO BE HELD IN CITY

Butler Sponsors Divisional Competi-
tion in Interstate Affair.

Speech department of Butler uni-
versity will sponsor a central divi-
sional competition in the interstate
oratorical contest Friday night at
Central Christian church, Walnut
and Delaware streets.

Speakers competing, announced
Professor W. Norwood Brigance of
Wabash college, central divisional
manager, are:

Paul Duncan, Butler university;
Don Moore, McKendree college, Leb-
anon, Ill.; Lowell Ditzian, William
Jewell college, Liberty, Mo., and H.
Clyde Reeves, University of Lex-
ington, Lexington, Ky.

Judges will be Profs. Lionel Crock-
er, Denison university; Carroll P.
Lehman, Western State Teachers
college; Harold T. Ross, De Pauw
university; Fred S. Sorrenson, Illi-
nois Normal university, and Myron
G. Phillips, Wabash college.

Professor Brigance will preside.

VETERANS HEAR SCHAUB

New Organization Is Outlined
at Tomlinson Hall Meeting.

More than a thousand ex-service
men met Monday night in Tomlin-
son hall to hear a discussion of the
purposes of the newly organized Na-
tional United American Veterans,
Inc.

"Justice for the veteran through
nonpartisan participation in politics
is our aim," declared Edward G.
Schaub, national commander.

Schaub stated that the organiza-
tion will try to elect men to office
who will work for legislation favor-
ing ex-service men.

Other speakers were Ralph E.
Green, national vice-commander,
and Herman H. Hiles, national ad-
jutant.

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Good returning until Monday night.

Next Saturday
CLEVELAND . . . \$4.00

Leave 11:30 p.m. Return Sunday night.
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TOLEDO . . . 3.50

Leave 10:35 p.m. Return Sunday night.

Next Sunday
ST. LOUIS . . . \$4.00

Leave 12:35 a.m. or 2:45 a.m.
Return Sunday night.

\$3.60 Round Trip to Louisville. Going
Friday and Saturday; return
Monday.

Full Particulars at 112 Monument Circle,
Riley 3322, and Union Station, Riley 3333.

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Eliminates the Poisons that
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FAMINE HAUNTS MINERS' HOMES

Corporations Thrive on Misery of Serfs in Kentucky

BY ROBERT TALLEY
(Copyright, 1932, NEA Service, Inc.)

PINEVILLE, Ky., April 5.—This
is a closeup story of life as
it is today among Kentucky coal
miners, written from notes that
local authorities sought to con-
fiscate when I was arrested by
Police Chief Osborne of Pineville,
after I had returned from visiting
the homes of miners in a nearby
camp.

Fortunately, I did not have
them with me at the time, so the
Kentucky "censorship" was
thwarted.

If you were a miner hereabouts
and were lucky enough to have a
job, you would earn about \$3.50
a day, assuming that you could
produce about ten tons of coal,
which is a good day's work.

It is impossible to give an exact
figure, since miners are paid so
much a ton and some miners
produce more, or less, than others.

You would get about three, or
possibly four, days' work a week.

Of your \$3.50 a day, you would
have to spend 5 cents a day for carbide
for your miner's lamp and about
40 cents each day for explosives
you used in blasting coal.

If you were not actually a coal
digger, but a mine laborer—engaged
in laying track or something like that—your daily wage
would be around \$2.25.

In either case, you probably
would have a wife and three
children to support, since five is
the average family.

BEFORE you could draw any
part of your earnings you
would have to accumulate enough
for the mining company you
worked for to make the following
"cuts."

Approximately \$5 a month rent
for a company-owned house.

Two dollars a month (\$1 if un-
married) for the company's
doctor, which you pay whether
you are sick or well.

One dollar and fifty cents a
month for coal to heat your home
and cook your food, the rate being
the same winter and summer.

Fifty cents a month for black-
smithing your tools (if a miner).

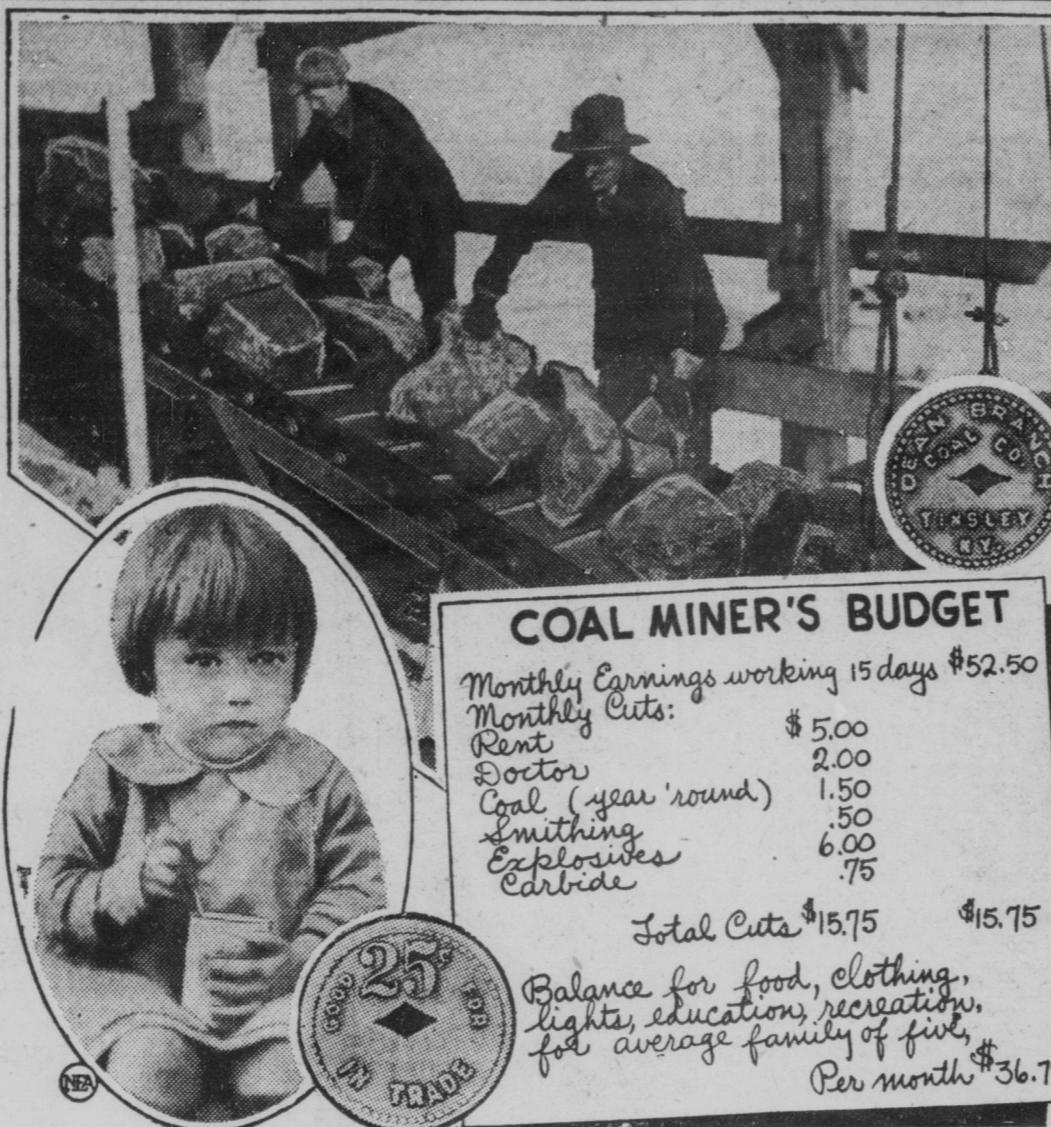
After these "cuts" (and, in
some cases, others such as insur-
ance, burial fund, etc.) you would
then be permitted to draw scrip
(company money) for making
purchases at the commissary
(company store) which carries in
stock groceries, clothing, hard-
ware, tobacco, shoes, canned goods,
pots, pans and about everything
else that a miner's family needs
to buy.

YOU would be issued your scrip
by the mine pay roll clerk
after he had checked your earnings
to see how much you had
coming.

You would pay this scrip over
the counter of the company store
just as though it were real money.

Then, when pay day rolled
around every two weeks, you
could draw the remainder of your
earnings in cash—provided any-
thing remained.

I talked with miners in their
homes, to learn the truth of their



WORKING FOR BRASS CHECKS GOOD AT THE COMPANY STORE—Kentucky miners are shown above grading coal, while the two "coins" are scrip money in which they are paid. Below, a miner's child with a glass of "half and half" (canned milk, supplied by the state, and water) and an example of a miner's budget.

living conditions, despite the bars
against such action that Kentucky
authorities have erected against
visiting newspaper men.

Word of my visit to a mine
camp got to Police Chief Osborne
of Pineville, in some mysterious
way, and shortly after my return to
town I was arrested by him and taken
before County Prosecutor Walter B. Smith. Both demanded my notes. They failed to
get them—hence this story.

Around Pineville, I was told by
miners that if they tried to draw out
too much money in cash, instead of
spending it at the company store, they
would be fired.

However, this isn't always an
issue. A mine worker employed
by a coal company near Pineville
told me that he hadn't drawn any
real money since last fall—not even
enough to buy a postage stamp.

His neighbor just across the
creek told me he has not drawn
any real money in two years.

THE first man is a mine laborer
at \$2.25 a day now, and is
worried over a rumor that this is
soon to be cut to \$2. Last year

this time he was making \$2.50; a
few years back he was getting
\$6.20 a day.

He has a wife, two small daugh-
ters and a son. Another baby is
due. The family lives in a
two-room frame shack. His two
small daughters—5 and 3 years old
—are among the numbers of mine
children now being allotted four
cans of condensed milk each week
by the state of Kentucky.

The miners call this milk
"cream." It is mixed half and half
with water and into this corn-
bread is crumbled. On this diet,
they fight off starvation.

Across the rushing mountain
creek his neighbor lives in a simi-
lar house with his wife and their
eight children.

The house is a rickety frame
shack, erected years ago. Chinks
in its board walls are stuffed with
paper and rags, cardboard replaces
several missing window panes.

The roof is tar paper, like that
used on chicken houses. The fur-
niture consists of:

Room 1, two cheap iron beds,
two cane chairs with burst
bottoms, a box on the floor that
serves as a trunk.

Room 2, another bed, a kitchen
stove, a few cooking utensils and
a home-made table.

TO both houses—as well as the
others in this camp—water
must be "toted" from the camp
well. Coal for cooking and heat-
ing must "toted" from the mine.

There also are the old-fashioned
outhouses.

His wife was nursing a 9-
months-old baby when I called.
Another small child was playing
on the bare, splintery floor with
a tin can. Its shoes were as
ragged as its clothes, and not even
mended.

Soon the husband, who was not
working that day, came in. He
was a pale, wan man, looking
much past 50.

"I'm 42 years old and I've been
in these mines thirty-four years—
started as a trap boy at 8—but I've
never seen times as hard as these," he
said when I asked him how he was getting along.

"I'm getting \$2 a day now for
a job on the tipple. My lungs
went bad and I had to give up
digging coal."

"During the boom days I made
\$10 or \$12 a day digging coal, and

so did a lot of the other boys.
Times was good then."

YET, according to the com-
plaint of numerous miners,
the mine owners have not reduced
their "cuts" for rent, coal, etc.,
since the days of high wages.

They also say that the commis-
saries charge higher prices than
ordinary stores, which some of the
mine operators admit with the
explanation that they can not buy
as cheaply as the chain stores.

That the companies require
their employees to trade at the
commissaries was admitted by a
coal operator, who just had fin-
ished explaining to me that, at
present market prices, he was los-
ing 20 cents on every ton he produced.

"We are losing money on coal
and we try to cover that with
profits from the store," he said.

The two miners whose plight I
have described are in a "middle"
class, all too frequently found.

Below them are hundreds of
miners unable to find any work
at all and several hundred "black-
listed" men—"Red agitators," the
business men of Pineville call
them—who have no jobs and no
hope of getting any.

They are living in abandoned
railroad stations and anywhere
else they can find a roof since
they were evicted from company
houses and their furniture set
out in the middle of the road.

who responded when the so-called
"Communist party" workers came
here last year to bring their brand
of relief to the misery of the Ken-
tucky mine fields.

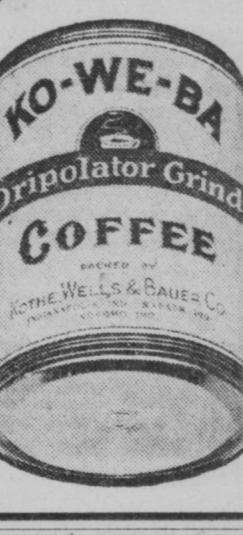
The short-lived and abortive
strike in January literally was
started out brought about by the
adamanant and rigidly enforced re-
fusal of Harlan and Bell county

officials to permit union relief food
to be brought in here, on the
ground that such food came from
Communists or their adherents.

Next: The strange manner in
which coal operators and business
men in the mining area are trying
to solve a tangled economic prob-
lem by the suppression of all civil
liberties and human rights.



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and Girls,
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1c

5c

15c

5c