

St. Croix Avis

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TELEGRAM.

ST. CROIX STATION.

London, April 8th. Tuesday night, unless there is some new developments meantime, will see the commencement of the greatest labour struggle in the country's history. Approximately 2,000,000 workers then will have ceased their duties in protest against what they consider to be an organized attempt on the part of the employers, to enforce a general reduction in wages. This is the central fact of the labour situation as it developed today in a breakdown in the miners conference and a consequent decision by the tripple alliance, made up of miners and railway and transport workers for the first time since it was organized, that its entire membership, roughly estimated at 1,000,000 miners and 500,000 men each from the railway and transport workers organization, should quit work in support of the strike of the miners. The Govt. standpoint, as voiced by Mr. Lloyd George in a brief speech in the House of Commons this afternoon, is that the action of the miners and other members of the tripple alliance is an attempt by direct action to intimidate parliament and the nation. The Prime Minister announced the military and other measures which the Govt. intended to take to defeat this attempt. The standpoint of the Miners is that the sudden removal of control of the coal mines is the result of a pact between the Govt. and the mine-owners, to enable the owners to enforce an unjustified reduction in wages. The attitude of the railwaymen is that un-

less there is support of of the miners at the present time, a similar dilemma will happen to the railwaymen on some future occasion when the railways are released from Govt's control. The refusal of the miners to yield on the question of permitting Pumpmen to return to the mines, had as its motive a conviction that the withdrawal of the pumpmen is the only weapon in their hands. They argue that a few weeks cessation of work will not really injure the mineowners, who, considering the depressed condition of industry, have ample stocks of coal on the surface. They declare that the mineowners have brought this fate upon themselves by including the pumpmen among those whose contracts will be cancelled until they accept new wage terms, made not through joint discussion, but by the mineowners themselves. The arguments of the miners find absolutely no support, except on the part of the extreme socialist newspapers. The other paper condemn them strongly, and general regret is expressed that the miners refused to listen to the advice of men like Mr. Asquith, Mr. Clynes, and Mr. Henderson. In this connection, Mr. Clynes who is chairman of the parliamentary labour party, made an interesting statement on the adjournment of the House of Commons this afternoon. When expressing regret over the decision of the miners, he said he actually regretted that Mr. Lloyd George thought it proper to make imputations against the motives of the leaders of the miners. He proceeded to say, that the actual damage done to the mines up to the present time had been so small, that it did not justify this fact being made the cause for interfering with the negotiations which might lead to a settlement of disputes. Mr. Clynes concluded by declaring that the cost to the country through the strike would be far greater than would have been the cause if the Govt. continued to control the mines a little while longer until the wage question was settled. The mine-owners issued tonight a statement in which they attempt to refute the opinion of Mr. Clynes that the actual damage done to the mines up to the present had been small. The statement points out that the majority of the flooded pits can be reopened, the operation would be costly, and that only a small fraction of the regular men employed can be set to work during restoration. Details are

then given, showing that several pits in Wales, Staffordshire and elsewhere have been irretrievably ruined. It says in certain areas organized gangs of toughs, who have nothing to do with the mining industry, forced a bank of pits, while in Scotland and destruction to colliery working is most serious. In conclusion the statement declares that in Fifeshire and in the Lothians the local industry and employment is inevitable long after the dispute is settled. The momentous proclamation by the Prime Minister of a state of industrial war made in the House in a quiet but serious tone. Mr. Lloyd George read it from the prepared document. A similar statement was made in the House of Lords by Earl Curzon of Kedleston. A deputation of the railwaymen and transport workers will visit the Prime Minister tomorrow morning to convey to him the decision of the Triple Alliance to back the miners. In some quarters this visit is being regarded as a new peace move. Likewise of interest is an authorized statement issued tonight, to the effect that the Govt is willing to call a conference, as previously suggested to discuss the question of pumping the mines. A supplement of the London Gazette tonight contains all the necessary proclamations calling out the reserves. The Gazette states that steps are being taken to put into force all the Govts. precautionary measures to enforce the operation of the public services and to maintain food supplies.

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NOTICE.

THE undersigned hereby makes known that he is not responsible for any debts contracted by his wife GRACE ANN WILLIAMS.

JOSEPHUS AGUSTUS WILLIAMS.

Christiansted, 4th April 1921.