

BELFAST COAL CRISIS

A TEMPORARY ARRANGEMENT

Successful City Hall Conference.

WORK TO BE RESUMED TO-DAY

General satisfaction will be felt throughout Belfast at the announcement that an agreement was reached on Saturday in connection with the dispute between the coal merchants and the dock workers, whereby work will be resumed to-day pending a conference to be held as soon as convenient. The deadlock which prevailed at the Queen's Quay since Monday last had been acutely felt in the city, particularly in the homes of the poor, and a prolongation of the dispute would have caused very serious consequences in the industrial life of the community. The Lord Mayor (Councillor W. F. Coates, J.P.) is to be heartily

congratulated upon the success which attended his efforts as mediator between the parties. On his return from London he was met by Mr. Coates, finding the coal trade at a standstill, immediately set to work to master the details of the dispute and to arrange a compromise between the merchants and the men. Negotiations were continued until yesterday afternoon, when it was placed as the possibility of a temporary arrangement being come to for the resumption of work in order that the danger of a coal famine might be averted. The proceedings were eventually adjourned till Saturday morning, August 1st, one o'clock on that day the Lord Mayor, Sir J. Meyer issued the following official statement:—

The Lord Mayor's Conference with the representatives of the coal merchants and the representatives of the dockers involved in the dispute resumed at ten o'clock this morning. Mr. Kinnersley Smith, Esq., M.P., Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, were present, and after several tangle-shots of views had taken place an agreement was come to that the men would resume work at twelve o'clock noon on Monday, the 29rd inst. The subject of wages will be discussed, the conference suggested at yesterday's sitting to be held as soon as convenient, but if not held next week the start on the following Monday, the 29rd inst., also to be at twelve o'clock noon.

A second vote of thanks to the Lord Mayor for his valuable services in bringing the matter together and acting as mediator in the negotia-

tions was passed, and the Lord Mayor, in reply, expressed his satisfaction that he had been of service at this very serious juncture in a matter so vital to the interests of the city.

The dispute in which the harbour cramenen were involved automatically came to an end with the foregoing agreement.

The various interests involved were represented in the negotiations as under:—

Ministry of Labour—Mr. T. J. Kinnear and Mr. J. Ferguson.

Coal Merchants—Messrs. Samuel Kelly (John Kelly, Ltd.); J. C. Craig (Hugh Craig & Co.); W. A. King (Alex. King, Ltd.); J. Carter (Wigan Coal and Iron Co., Ltd.); Percy Newiman (Secretary, John Milligan & Co., Ltd.); and John Ferguson (Secretary of the Coal Merchants' Association).

National Union of Dock and Riverside and General Workers—Messrs. E. P. Hart, William McCosh, and Edward Armstrong.

National Amalgamated Union of Labour—Messrs. Samuel Bradley and Albert Lockett, representing the cramenen.

Irish Transport Workers' Union—Councillor Denis Houston.

COAL STORES RAIDED.

Remarkable Scenes at Queen's Quay.

Remarkable scenes took place at the Queen's Quay on Saturday morning while the City Hall conference was in progress, the stores of the vari-

traded by hundreds of women and children, who carried away any fuel they could glean, bolster cases, soldiers' kit bags, aprons, zinc basins, and dilapidated portmanteaus being used for the purpose. The traders, who were not interfered with by the police or the military, carried their burdens to the Queen's Bridge where they calmly loaded the teamwags with their spoils and proceeded homewards. The news was spread throughout the poorer parts of the city by word of mouth, and in a few minutes a vast crowd was heading for the Queen's Quay with donkey carts, hand carts, perambulators, go-carts, and vehicles of the home-made variety. Anxious and apprehensive at first, they gained confidence when they were assured that the police would not interfere, and from hunting round practically empty coal yards they went for bigger game. Messrs. Macpherson & Todd had about 100 tons of anthracite and a considerable quantity of English coal lying on the quay opposite the Colonnade, and it was here that the mischief was done. The snow off a ditch. There was some excitement when the crowd broke into the stores of coal held for the military by Messrs. John Kelly, Ltd., and a quantity was stolen before the police interfered. The mischief was done by a lorry belonging to Messrs. Kelly. Drew drove to the Queen's Road with two tons of coal, and within ten minutes the driver was back at the yard with empty bags. The lorry had been surrounded by

street, and returned the bags to the driver. One firm began to sell slack, and a queue was quickly formed, but the infection of mob law seized the crowd, and in a short space of time the store was cleared without ceremony.

Two steamers were discharged on Saturday morning by Messrs. John Milligen & Co., and John Kelly, Ltd., and the coal was obtained by the bellmen for distribution amongst the poor people. It may be mentioned that Messrs. Kelly unloaded about 500 tons of coal on Friday and Saturday by means of volunteer staffs. On Saturday morning Messrs. Kelly turned out four of their own horses with loads of coal for the poor of the east end of the city, and valuable assistance was given in the work of distribution by Councillor David Anderson, J.P., Newtonwards Road.

THE KING'S NATIONAL ROLL.

The Ministry of Labour announces that the first edition of the King's National Roll, in connection with the scheme for the employment of disabled ex-service men on a percentage basis, is now in the hands of the printers, and will be issued shortly. The Roll is headed by the names of H.M. the King and H.M. Queen Alexandra, and contains the names (arranged under counties) of all firms to whom certificates have been issued up to the 1st of January, 1919, for the purpose of employing disabled ex-service men. The number of firms included in the first edition is approximately 9,500. The firms in question employ in all 1,432,120 work-people, of whom nearly 30,000 are disabled ex-service men.

roads out. Admission meant a deliberate attempt to ruin British industry. Questions of Free Trade and Protection were clearly not the question at the present time. I have not weakened in my views on Free Trade. Liberalism attacks monopoly; Socialism attacks capital. Liberalism at this juncture has a vital part to play, not as an open question but as a clear-cut and a national life.

The meeting then resolved itself into a session on Free Trade. Many questions were put, especially on Free Trade, and there was some difference of opinion expressed.

Mr. Hargrave replied to the interrogations put, and met with a preponderance of support.

In the course of further discussion, Mr. James Miller asked what would happen supposing that the association chose a second Liberal candidate of the present type. Would the Government oppose the nominee?

Mr. Churchill said it was not his business to answer that sort of question. They had the right to settle their own affairs, and though they would try to settle them in a friendly way from the point of view of the greatest good to the greatest number in good comradeship and to keep the show together.

RENT RESTRICTIONS ACT.

Deputation from Shopkeepers.

Mr. Churchill yesterday received deputations at his hotel at Dundee in support of representations that more security should be given to shopkeepers under the rent restrictions legislation, and that the period covered by the Act should be extended.

Mr. Churchill said the question was engaging the attention of the Government. It was clear that by July 1st the house shortage would not be remedied. It seemed to him probable that a committee would be appointed almost immediately to discuss the subject in the light of facts as we now knew them. If legislation were required before July 1st there was no time to lose. He would discuss the question of shops with the department concerned.