

tucky have now secured relief loans from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation with which it is hoped to relieve the most severe suffering from hunger this winter. The American Friends Service Committee has been invited to cooperate in the administration of relief to children in these states. Quaker administration is a guarantee of impartiality in relief work entrusted to them, no discrimination being made by the Friends on grounds of race, political, union or non-union affiliations. This minimum of relief, however, by no means meets the tremendous needs of the coal fields. Nor does it begin to touch the rehabilitation program described in this article.

RECONSTRUCTING A COMMUNITY

But more than relief is needed. For this reason it was with peculiar interest that I visited Crown Mine, the most highly developed of the Quaker rehabilitation experiments. Here William and Ruth Simkin, the young Friends in charge, are living in a company house. Another company house has been turned into a community house with a small library, a little "store," recreation club rooms, and weave rooms where handlooms have been set up. Women and girls are learning to make hand-woven rugs and mats. A carpenter shop has also been opened. Quarters are being furnished rent free by the operator. Indeed, no one is paying rent at Crown. The mine is "closed" and the operator has a heart.

With their genius for the discovery of local talent, the Quakers have brought Mr. Godlove down from his home in the hills to teach the art of chair making, for which he and his father before him have been famous. Hickory logs are carried in from the woods, and graceful, handmade hickory chairs are made by men who, as they work, feel a revival of hope in their lives. Stools, gate-leg tables, sewing boxes, book racks, wooden spoons, picturesque "cobblers' benches"—these and other products come from the shop at Crown and the chain of shops established in other mines by the Quakers. If handcraft industries can spring up and supply work and a new joy in life, it is worth a great effort. The Mountaineer Craftsmen's Cooperative Association has been incorporated to market the products of the shops and classes. A simple method of exchange of goods among the unemployed families is also being worked out. From the fifty-four families in this community, twenty-four men and women are now employed in the shops. The task of rehabilitation at Crown, so well begun, must be further developed. Hundreds of deserted camps await the same sort of help. It is not enough to feed the unemployed. They must be given an opportunity to work.

Dr. Homer Morris, professor of sociology in Fiske University, has been in charge of the field activities of the Friends. He plans, in addition to the program which

I have described, a detailed sociological survey of some typical mining communities as a basis for intelligent placement of surplus miners who desire work in other industries as opportunity arises. The Quakers are doing what they can. One can but hope that a similiar statesmanship may appear among political and industrial leaders upon whom must rest the responsibility for the necessary basic reorganization of the coal industry.

Meanwhile the constructive efforts of the American Friends Service Committee cannot continue without renewed and increased financial support. The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America has officially endorsed and is actively cooperating with the Quakers in securing gifts of clothing and money, and in promoting an educational program in the churches to create an intelligent public opinion and to arouse the conscience of church people to constructive action.

I shall not soon forget visiting a family in one of these coal camps in the hills of West Virginia. There was no food whatever in the house. The husband who has tried desperately for weeks to get work, stood in the doorway surrounded by his hungry children. "She's been sick," he said, laying his hand affectionately on his wife's shoulder. "She worries too much. But I tell her not to worry. Help will come."

Will it?



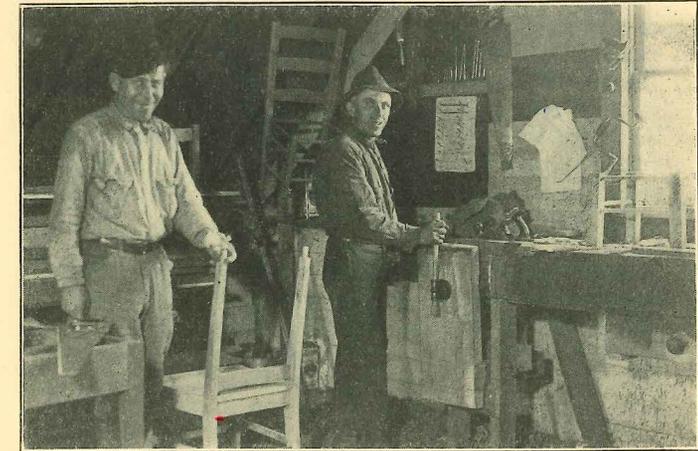
Clothing should be mailed (prepaid) to American Friends Service Committee, 1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia.

Contributions should be mailed to Olive Van Horn, Treasurer, Coal Areas Relief, Federal Council of Churches, 105 East 22nd Street, New York, New York.



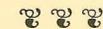
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REHABILITATION IN THE COAL FIELDS

By JAMES MYERS
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REHABILITATION IN THE COAL FIELDS

AN EMACIATED baby looked up at me from within a wooden box inscribed in large red letters—"High Explosives." Its mother had parked it there during the meeting of the sewing class in an abandoned store at an isolated mining camp in West Virginia. The picture, it seemed to me, was quite symbolic of the state of the bituminous coal industry as I have seen it in a number of states during the past year, and on a trip from which I have just returned. The entire industry is in a highly explosive condition. Men simply will not see their children starve.

"If you haven't got enough to eat," said Van A. Bitter of the United Mine Workers at a district convention in Fairmont, West Virginia, where miners were on strike, "go out and take it. There are not enough state police or yellowdogs in West Virginia to stop the army of the United Mine Workers of America." This from the "conservative" American Federation of Labor! Never before in my industrial investigations have I sensed so strong a possibility of widespread civil war in the coal fields. The news from Illinois and other states confirms this view.

It is nothing short of a tragedy that no effective national leadership, either political or industrial, has emerged to lead the industry out of chaos. Only federal government action can save it now. The best-meaning employers are unable to pay anything but starvation wages because of extreme cutthroat competition and the consequent widespread demoralization. It would seem that the industry must be declared a public utility and placed under federal regulation with provision for collective wage agreements, planning and control of production. The United States Coal Commission report pointed in this direction as far back as 1923. But neither Congress nor succeeding administrations have taken any action. Meanwhile the people perish.

Brave attempts at relief are being made in many places. The American Friends Service Committee (Quakers) served one hot meal a day to 40,000 school children in forty-one counties in Kentucky, West Virginia, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Illinois last winter. There is no doubt that their work saved the lives of many children and prevented worse disease and widespread epidemics. Sixty tons of clothing, donated by church people and others from all over the United States, were distributed.

The Quakers have had funds sufficient only for the feeding of children and expectant mothers. They have realized that even if they were able to feed all the hungry, that would not be enough. For the rehabilitation of families and communities they have therefore worked out some plans which are the more significant

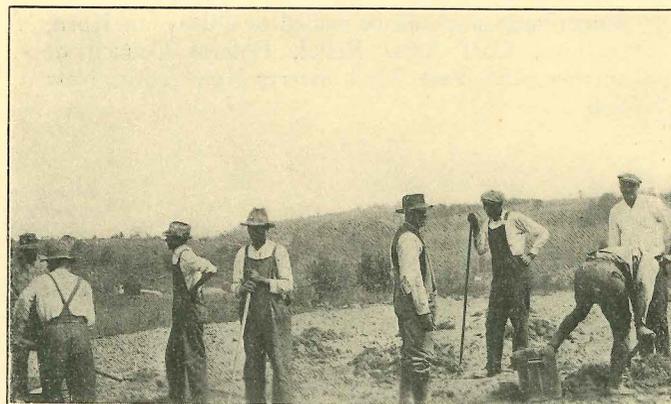
because something of the kind will be necessary even "if and when" the industry itself is intelligently re-organized.

A REHABILITATION PROGRAM

I have just returned from a trip to Morgantown, Monongalia County, West Virginia, where I inspected some of the actual experiments which are being conducted by the Quakers in cooperation with the county welfare board and the county council of social agencies.

Eleven dressmaking and sewing classes have been conducted in outlying coal camps in this county. Thousands of garments have been made by the miners' wives: underclothing, women's and girls' dresses, shirts, boys' pants, quilts and comforters for bedding, embroidery for sale. The first objective was to clothe the children so that they could go to school. After that the mothers made clothing for themselves and then articles were placed on sale in a store donated by the Morgan Hotel in Morgantown. Everybody helped. The mine operators usually supplied the place to meet. Women from Morgantown and teachers from the West Virginia University volunteered to give instructions—the Quakers supplied materials—the men in the camps often carried sewing machines from distant houses up and down steep banks to the place of meeting. It was a cooperative enterprise. In addition to clothing the community, it brought a little touch of social life and friendship into dreary places.

Shoes, too, came in for reconstruction. Miners were discovered who knew how to "roll their own." They were supplied with cobblers' benches and lasts, and a cobblers' unit was set up in each camp. The old shoes received in clothing bundles from all over the United States were patched and soled and made ready for the heavy wear and tear of winter in the mountains.



An enormous increase in "subsistence gardens" has been promoted under a carefully worked out plan of

cooperation. Dr. Nat Frame and Mr. Humphreys and Mr. Grimes of the extension department of West Virginia University, Morgantown, the state department of agriculture, the Red Cross, Mr. Fred C. Croxton of the President's Committee on unemployment relief, and the Quakers have worked together. There are little garden patches by the houses in the coal camps, as well as some larger community gardens, where a large quantity of food is being raised this summer by the miners. It is not estimated that the produce will care for more than a small part of next winter's needs, still it is a help in that direction. Agricultural experts are furnishing information on methods of preservation, drying, pit storage and canning.

"Last summer about six thousand quarts of apples, apple butter and tomatoes were canned, and over two hundred bushels of apples were dried in the community canning kitchens which were made available by the various churches in Morgantown," said Mrs. Henderson, the volunteer manager of this "industry." Mrs. Henderson told me that so eager were the miners' wives that many got up at four o'clock in the morning and walked as much as eight miles to town to "earn" the twenty-five pound bag of sugar which they received as their day's pay! This they carried home! They used the sugar to preserve for the winter the wild blackberries which they gathered from the hillsides.

The products of the canning kitchens are saved for the grocery baskets given out in county relief during the winter, in return for work on county roads. Nothing is wasted in Monongalia county; people work for everything they get, even public relief. Never, I think, have I seen such an extensive program of voluntary community effort. Mrs. Friend E. Clark, president of the council of social agencies last year, was largely responsible for the extensive program of county relief and rehabilitation. Under her have worked some eighty women as volunteers doing social case-work in outlying camps. "Do you feel that you have been able to cover the relief needs of the country?" I asked. "No," she replied, "we are just scratching the surface."

Dr. William E. Brooks is pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Morgantown, president of the county welfare board, and an outstanding citizen who has worked day and night on relief and rehabilitation. He pointed out to me very forcefully the fallacy and unfairness of expecting a local community or neighboring city like Morgantown to bear the entire burden of relief for thousands of miners who were brought into the county by the coal companies, which are in turn owned almost entirely by outside capital. "These 'wounded men' are left lying by our roadsides," he said. "We are doing our best to play the good Samaritan. But it is a national problem, and it is only fair that national resources should help to furnish relief." West Virginia and Ken-