The Miners' Federation have made a demand to the Coal Controller for an advance of 30 per cent on earnings plus war wages, i.e. 30 per cent on the earnings resulting from the ordinary operation of the sliding scales, with the war wage of 3/- per day in addition. As usual they have stated that they have reduced their demand to the minimum which they consider reasonable, and they have expressed no willingness to discuss any other figure. They have also put forward the following claims under the heading of demobilisation:

(a) That this Conference demands that all demobilised mine workers shall be fully discharged from the Army and Navy; and, as soon as they are able, and desire, to resume work, shall be reinstated in the mines they left at the time of enlistment.

(b) Any such mine-workers not able to perform a normal day's work shall be paid the full wages appertaining to the grade to which they belonged, or would have belonged had they not enlisted.

(c) Demobilised men who are partly disabled and unable to follow work in the mines shall be trained for other suitable occupation, and paid during training an allowance equal to what they would have earned in or about the mines had they not been disabled. The allowance to continue after training until suitable employment is found. The cost of training and allowance to be at the expense of the State.

(d) Demobilised mine workers and men who are displaced to make room for men returned from the Army or Navy shall be paid from State Funds, an out-of-work allowance equal to the wages they would have earned had they been employed in and about the mines.

(e) In no case shall wages or allowance interfere with pensions to which such discharged soldiers and sailors are, or may be, entitled.

(f) All matters coming within the above proposals shall be first dealt with by the Joint Pit Committees of mine owners and mine workers, and if necessary, be submitted to the District Joint Committee.

(g) In order to make easier the realization of these demands we press the Government to amend the Mines Eight Hours Act so that "six" hours shall be substituted for "eight" hours in that Act. Also for this purpose, and in the interests of miners in particular, and the community in general, we urge the Government to proceed at once to the Nationalisation of all mines and minerals.
(h) That the Executive Committee interview the Prime Minister or some other Government representatives, on these proposals. Failing a satisfactory answer a further Conference be convened to determine the policy to be adopted to realise these demands.

2. The claim in respect of wages was put before the Controller of Coal Mines on the 9th January. The other points were submitted to the Minister of Labour, the President of the Board of Trade and the Home Secretary on the 31st January and an undertaking has been given to the Miners' Executive that the Government's reply covering all the points will be given if possible by the end of this week.

Wages and Hours.

3. The demands for increased wages and reduction in hours are of a very far-reaching character and if conceded would involve very great increases in the price of coal. It is estimated that the wage demand alone would amount to about 40 millions per annum and that probably about 3/6 to 3/- per ton would have to be added to the present price of coal on an annual output of about 250 million tons. It is impracticable to estimate what additional cost would be involved by the adoption of the reduced working hours, but it is clear that the concession would still further greatly increase the price of coal.

Mr. Smillie in the interview referred to admitted that, unless double shifts were worked (a proposal with which some of the districts will not agree) or unless there is some other change in working arrangements, it would involve a decrease in output of about 25 per cent and he claimed at the same time that the miners' rate of pay must be made up so as to enable him to earn as much in six hours as he does in eight.

The claim for the 6 hour day is made in respect of surface workers as well as underground workers, and it is clear therefore that it is based on considerations other than the disadvantages of working below ground. One reason put forward by the miners was the desire that the reduced hours should be put into force in order to absorb labour.
4. The earnings of the different classes of workmen in the different coalfields show the greatest diversity, and it is impossible to make any safe generalisation upon a National basis.

The following figures are taken from typical collieries in each coalfield:

Specimens of Weekly Wages Earnings of different classes of persons employed at Coal Mines taken from typical undertakings in all Divisions except Scotland, Yorkshire and North Midlands (Not yet received).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Pre-War</th>
<th>Including subseqent 1st scale increase</th>
<th>Including 2nd War Wage</th>
<th>Result if 30% increase were conceded, assuming that men worked same number of shifts, War Wage of 15/- again being added.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Coal getters</td>
<td>2. 4. 5.</td>
<td>3. 8. 4.</td>
<td>3.18. 2</td>
<td>4. 6. 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Putters, etc</td>
<td>1, 18. 11.</td>
<td>3. 1. 3.</td>
<td>3.15. 2</td>
<td>4. 2. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Stonemen</td>
<td>2. 2. 7</td>
<td>3. 3. 7</td>
<td>3.11. 2</td>
<td>4. 3. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Deputies Firemen &amp; Examiners</td>
<td>2. 8. 4</td>
<td>3.12. 1</td>
<td>4. 0. 1</td>
<td>4.10. 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mechanical Haulage Hands (a) Men (b) Boys</td>
<td>1. 12. 0</td>
<td>2. 3. 5</td>
<td>2.13. 0</td>
<td>2.15. 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Other underground labour</td>
<td>1. 11. 9</td>
<td>2.11. 7</td>
<td>2.15. 2</td>
<td>3. 5. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Enginemen</td>
<td>2. 4. 1</td>
<td>3. 4. 0</td>
<td>3.13.11</td>
<td>4. 3. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Pitheadmen</td>
<td>1. 8. 4</td>
<td>2. 0.10</td>
<td>2. 6. 2</td>
<td>2.14. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Screen Hands (a) Men (b) Boys &amp; Girls</td>
<td>1. 18. 1</td>
<td>2. 9. 6</td>
<td>2.16. 2</td>
<td>3. 6. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Stokers &amp; Boilermen</td>
<td>1. 18. 9</td>
<td>2. 6. 2</td>
<td>3. 5. 2</td>
<td>3.12. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Tradesmen</td>
<td>1. 19. 4</td>
<td>2.15. 7</td>
<td>3. 5.10</td>
<td>3.10. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Other Surface labour</td>
<td>1. 7. 11</td>
<td>2. 6. 4</td>
<td>2.12. 7</td>
<td>3. 1.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Classes 1, 2 and 3, are piece-workers and Classes 4, to 12 are datal men. In both cases the present wages are from 100 to 110 per cent higher than the pre-war wages. The demand for the additional 30 per cent on earnings (which must be based upon Column 4, less 18/- per inc) means a rise over pre-war wages of about 160 percent. Column 5, of the above figures shows the approximate earnings which would result from the concession of the 30 per cent on the assumption that the men would work the same number of shifts. It by no means follows that they would do so, as it is constantly alleged by the owners that an increase in wages is accompanied by an increase in absenteeism.

6. In the Engineering, Shipbuilding and other munitions trades the general advances of wages during the war have amounted to 22/6d. per week, plus the bonus of 12% per cent - a total over pre-war rates of about 35/- for labourers and about 37/- for skilled men, which means that the labourers' increase is about 145 per cent and that of the skilled men 95 per cent.

7. The miners' last increase was in June 1918, when a further war wage of 1/6d. per day was conceded. Immediately following that advance, and to some extent in consequence of it, the other trades (engineering, shipbuilding, explosives etc.) received by arbitration an advance of 3/6d. a week - 7d. per day - and in December 1918, by which date there had been a marked increase in the cost of living, these same trades received, again by arbitration, a further advance of 5/- per week - 10d. per day. Assuming that the advances given last Summer left the two groups approximately level as regards war wage advances (an assumption which is open to question in view of the considerable sliding scale advances previously received by the miners) it will be seen that the miners are behind to the extent of 5/- per week. This is something, very different from their claim for 30 per cent on earnings.

8. If the present demands, which are put forward under a more or less direct threat to cease work, are conceded the effects are bound to be far-reaching. Apart from the encouragement it would give to the advocates of "direct action" in other trades, the addition to the price of coal per hundredweight (as sold to the small consumer) will be serious and will be all the more resented because the Unemployment Donation at its present high figure will be running out and a large portion of the industrial community which has been earning high wages on munitions work during the war period, will be forced down on a lower standard of life. Furthermore, the widows of soldiers, disabled soldiers and soldiers who are not able to obtain employment will also doubtless show their resentment at an increase of coal prices. The Treasury would be concerned with the effect on the position of the export trade of British coal, while the position of the railways (already deeply in debt owing to the large increase given to the railwaymen) would be seriously compromised by the addition to the price of coal.

Some estimate of the effect upon the cost of iron and steel and in consequence upon shipbuilding and other essential industries dependent upon these commodities may be gathered from the following facts -

(a) Every ton of pig iron requires 2.02 tons of coal or its equivalent in coke. This means 6/- per ton extra on pig iron and about 15/- per ton on the price of steel.
(b) Nearly all the ironstone miners are members of the Miners' Federation and would demand the same increase.

(c) Consequent increases would follow in the wages of coke-men and blast-furnace men.

9. Thus the re-start of industry on a competitive commercial basis is bound to be hindered by any considerable increase in the price of coal and by the resultant increase in costs of other commodities; the difficulty of finding employment for the demobilised forces will be correspondingly increased.

10. The question at once arises, how are the demands to be dealt with? The claim is openly a claim made to the Government and the Government (as representing the community) are justified in saying that the Miners' Federation, in putting forward claims that the rest of the community shall contribute a large addition to miners' wages, are not entitled to say that they shall themselves fix the amount of that contribution and hold up the country if it is not conceded. The Government can properly reply that the question whether, and if so to what extent, miners' wages should be further increased and the question whether hours shall be reduced are matters which should not be determined by the claimants; they should be dealt with in the same way as the claims of other trades - by proper enquiry into the facts and circumstances of the case.

11. The argument in favour of insisting upon an enquiry is unanswerable on grounds of public policy, but the effect upon the attitude of other trades of any failure so to treat the miners ought to be considered. It cannot be expected that important trades such as the engineers, shipbuilders, chemical workers, building trade operatives, textile operatives, and others, will continue to have recourse to arbitration if the miners, by "direct action", can secure from the Government any terms they like to submit. Nothing is more unpopular among the Trade Union organisations than preferential treatment to any particular section. If it is suggested that the miners will cease work rather than submit their claim to an enquiry it will be necessary for the Government to decide at once to take the public fully into their confidence. The effects of a stoppage would, of course, at the present period of the year, with stocks at their present low level, be most serious. Bearing in mind the fact that the ground upon which the Government would take their stand would be insistence on an enquiry as a means of determining what increase if any should be given, it may be confidently predicted that public opinion would be solidly behind the Government, while the other Trade Unions although they might be sympathetically inclined towards the miners if their claims were refused point blank, would not be prepared to see the whole of industry shut down (and their own families put to grave discomfort) merely because the miners had been asked to submit their claim to impartial investigation.
11. It will be necessary therefore to ensure at an early stage that the press and the public fully understand what is the point at issue — not with a view to prejudicing the merits of the miners' claims but solely to explain what the claims are and to whom they are made and to state the reasons which make it expedient that the claims should be investigated by an impartial tribunal.

13. The procedure which is proposed is that the Government should intimate to the miners that there is no desire to view unsympathetically their wish to improve their standing and conditions of life. They should be offered at once whatever amount by way of additional war wage is due to them on the ground of increase in the cost of living since they received their last advance. For example they might be offered the same automatic cost-of-living scale which has been accepted by the National Union of Railwaymen, i.e. a scale which would give the miners an advance of 1/- per week for each 4 per cent increase in the cost of living since June 1918, i.e. 5/- a week. In practice this would mean practically 1/- per day on the war wage.

14. With regard to the other questions — including the balance of the wage-claim and the reduction of hours it should be pointed out that these are of a permanent character and would affect not only the coal trade but also the whole position of the industrial life of the country, and it is suggested, therefore, that the miners should be informed that the Government intend to establish at once a strong, representative committee on which the miners would nominate their own representatives to enquire into the matters raised.

15. The proposed committee should be empowered also to enquire into the wages of the various grades of coal miners. The wages of some of these grades have always been low and there would seem to be a case for special consideration in the case of the men in these grades.

16. The terms of reference should be sufficiently wide to enable the Committee to consider such questions as the organisation of the working of the pits, the use of tubs, improved haulage, etc. These are matters which have always been subjects of contention between the workpeople and the management and for many years it has been alleged that the output of the mines could be increased if improved facilities were available.

17. Finally the Committee could, if the Government so desire, or the miners press it, be asked to report on the future.
future position of the coal industry under which they would of course be entitled to consider any scheme that may be submitted to them in the way of joint control of the industry, national control, or nationalisation. In this way they could examine the organisation of the industry including cost of production and distribution, selling prices and profits, and it would be open to them to make recommendations on these heads.

18. It should be an instruction to the Committee to deal first and expeditiously with the claim on ages and hours of work, and present and interim report on these questions.

19. The miners' case does not stand alone - the railwaymen are putting forward another large claim for higher wages and the manner in which the miners' case is dealt with will set the pace for the railwaymen.

It is considered that the time has come when the Government should determine that direct negotiation on wages and other claims (accompanied by threats to stop work) between Government representatives and the trade unions must give place to a more judicial method of settlement and since, in the present case, the employers concerned cannot themselves negotiate owing to Government control of their property, the only course open to the Government is to insist on an enquiry.

Demobilisation Claims.

20. The claims made by the miners in connection with demobilisation, if granted, would put them in an exceptional position compared with the rest of the citizens of the country.

(a) Their first claim is for complete discharge on demobilisation, whereas all other soldiers are technically kept in the Reserve in order to provide for any possible emergency in connection with the peace negotiations.

(b) They demand that a mine worker not able to perform a normal day's work is to have the full wages that he could have earned as a miner. This does not seem to refer to men disabled or partly disabled, because these are dealt with in the next demand, and therefore it would appear that a miner, apparently able-bodied, is to be guaranteed a full day's wage whatever work he does.

(c) They ask that a partly disabled man unable to work in the mines should be trained for another occupation and, during the period of training and until suitable employment is thereafter found for him, is to receive a full miner's wage. In the ordinary case of a disabled soldier receiving training the amount of benefit is 33/- per week, with certain allowances in the cases of men who have families. No reason is suggested for giving the miners exceptional treatment in this respect.

(d) They claim that a man displaced from the mines to make room for a returned soldier shall receive a full miner's wage. This compares with an out-of-work donation to people in other trades in similar positions of
of 29/- a week. Further, no suggested term is put to the period during which this out-of-work donation is to be paid.

21. These demands are obviously extravagant in character. It is suggested that the reply of the Government to the miners should point out these differences, and explain that the scheme which is applicable to all the rest of the country must be equally applied to the miners.

(Signed) E. SHORTT.
A. STANLEY.
R.S. HORKH.

4th, February 1919.