

## THE 1921 MINER'S LOCK OUT

### A Mission to Stop Outcropping.



A contingent of miners from Pegg's Green, Coleorton and Griffydarn district who went on a peaceful mission to Ashby to stop outcropping. Some of the men carried Union Jacks—not Red Flags—and sang popular songs en route.

MAY 1921

SAMUEL T STEWART – DECEMBER 2020

## The Coal Industry: 1919-1925

Two weeks after the end of the first World War, the prime minister, David Lloyd George gave a speech in Wolverhampton: "The work is not over yet – the work of the nation, the work of the people, the work of those who have sacrificed. Let us work together first. What is our task? To make Britain a fit country for heroes to live in. I am not using the word 'heroes' in any spirit of boastfulness, but in the spirit of humble recognition of fact. I cannot think what these men have gone through. I have been there at the door of the furnace and witnessed it, but that is not being in it, and I saw them march into the furnace. There are millions of men who will come back. Let us make this a land fit for such men to live in. There is no time to lose. I want us to take advantage of this new spirit. Don't let us waste this victory merely in ringing joy bells."



David Low (cartoonist b. 7<sup>th</sup> April 1891) on the David Lloyd George Coalition (1918)

However, the government was slow to provide a "country for heroes to live in". After the war, and the ending of price controls, prices rose twice as fast during 1919 as they had during the worst years of the war. In that year, 35 million working days were lost to strikes, and on average there were 100,000 workers on strike every day - this being six times the 1918 rate. There were stoppages in the coal mines, in the printing industry, among transport workers, and the cotton industry for example. There were also mutinies in the military and two separate police strikes in London and Liverpool.

The miners were encouraged to go back to work by the government agreeing to establish a royal commission under John Sankey, a high court judge. Others on the commission included trade unionists, Robert Smillie, Herbert Smith and [Frank Hodges](#). Other progressive figures such as R. H. Tawney, Sidney Webb and Leo Chiozza Money,

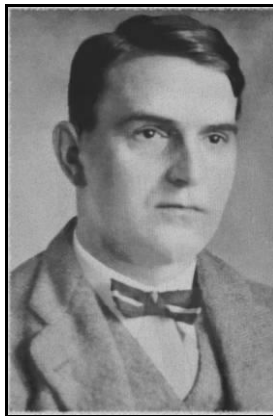
were also included, but Arthur Balfour and several conservative businessmen prevented the publishing of a united report.

In June 1919 the Sankey Commission came up with four reports, which ranged from complete nationalization on the part of the workers' representatives to restoration of undiluted private ownership on that of the owners. On 18th August, Lloyd George used the excuse of this disagreement to reject nationalization but offered the prospect of reorganization. When this was rejected by the **Miners' Federation of Great Britain**, the government kept control of the industry. It also agreed to pass legislation that would guarantee the miners a seven-hour day.

In January 1921, Arthur J. Cook, the left-wing militant from South Wales became a member of the executive of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain (MFGB). "A month later the decontrol of the mining industry was announced, with a consequent end to a national wages agreement and wage reductions. **A three-month lock-out from April 1921 ended in defeat for the miners; at its end Cook was again gaoled for two months' hard labour for incitement and unlawful assembly**".

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## FRANK HODGES



Frank Hodges was a considerable benefactor to the village of Newbold, where he provided houses for managers and miners, and also installed street lighting.

He was also seen as somewhat of a "poacher turned gamekeeper" being a former secretary of the MFGB (elected 1919) who fought for the miners interests and negotiated their terms and conditions with the government of the day. However, in his own collieries he is recorded as developing a sound reputation as an employer, and was judged to have "marked vision and business capacity" in his colliery concerns.

On Jan 1<sup>st</sup> 1947 (at which time Frank Hodges J.P. of "Rotherwood House, Ashby-De-La-Zouch was chairman and M.D.) New Lount Colliery was nationalised and became part of the N.C.B. East Midlands Division, Area No.8.

By the time Frank Hodges died from 'heart trouble', at the age of sixty in June 1947, he was living at Rotherwood House, Ashby-De-La-Zouch, Leicestershire. He had been ill for two years, and seriously ill for about eight weeks. He passed away at a convalescent home in Ruthin, Denbighshire, on the morning of Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1947, leaving his widow, daughter and a granddaughter.

1887 - Born in Woolaston, Gloucester.

1947 - Died June 3<sup>rd</sup>

1901 - Commenced work at Powell Tillery Pits, Abertillery, Wales, after leaving school at age 14.

1903 - Became a Methodist at 16 and began preaching.

1909 – 1910

Through his trade union links, he secured a Scholarship to Ruskin College, Oxford.

After a time in Paris, he returned to work as a hewer in the mines. This was hard work and he wanted something more intellectual. He successfully applied to be a trade union agent. He now felt he could change people's lives for the better, and started reforming the organisation.

1912 - Appointed Miners' Agent, Garw Valley South Wales Miners' federation

1919 - Appointed Secretary, Miners' Federation of Great Britain, He negotiated terms and conditions for miners, with the government and Lloyd George.

1923 - He won a seat as the Labour candidate for Lichfield under Ramsay MacDonald in the first Labour Government, and held the post of First Lord of the Admiralty. He lost his seat in the 1924 general election, so was only in Parliament for a short time.

1924 - Resigned as Secretary, Miners' Federation of Great Britain, on appointment as Civil Lord of the Admiralty. During this time he played golf with the Duke of York before he became George VI.

1925 - Appointed Secretary of the International Miners' Federation. He had performed this role in an honorary capacity since 1920. Resigned in 1927.

1926 - Vice Chairman, National Fuel and Power Committee.

1927 - Appointed member of the Central Electricity Board.

1933 - [Appointed Chairman and MD of The Leicestershire Colliery & Pipe Co. Ltd and M.D of New Lount Colliery which was in their ownership.](#)

1933 - [Joined the board of L & N Coal Distillation Company Ltd \( owned by The Leicestershire Colliery and Pipe Company Ltd\)](#), and became M.D. of Rockwood Colliery.

1936 - He purchased a 300 Acre dairy farm in Leicestershire and the tenancy of another farm nearby. He became noted for his modern methods of farming, and was active in the National Farmers' Union.

1947 - He left a substantial fortune of £132,959.

Frank Hodges was a director of many other companies – The Securities Management Trust Ltd (a subsidiary of the Bank of England), National Combustion Engines, International Combustion Ltd, William Beardmore and Co. Ltd, Granville Shipbuilders, Co-Operative Printers, the Glasgow Iron and Steel Company, The Lancashire Cotton Corporation, [The Newbold Brick Company Ltd](#), and Motherwell Brick Company Ltd.

Little is known about Frank Hodges later life, but he had a remarkable career, and his death was the occasion for substantial obituaries in several national papers and journals

**It is recommended that anyone interested in knowing more about this remarkable gentleman should read “The odyssey of Frank Hodges” by Chris Williams.**

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