

October 26, 1941

[Letter to John W. Lewis]

FDR Speech File

1388

70K
Miscellaneous
(Handwriting)

October 25, 1941

Dear Mr. Lewis:

I acknowledge your letter of yesterday. You say that you do not feel warranted in recommending an additional extension of the temporary agreement to keep the captive mines in operation pending a final settlement of the controversy. I must ask you to reconsider this decision.

In this crisis of our national life there must be uninterrupted production of coal for making steel, that basic material of our national defense. That is essential to the preservation of our freedoms, yours and mine; those freedoms upon which the very existence of the United Mine Workers of America depends.

^{My} Mr. Taylor is prepared to meet with you on Wednesday, to see if you and he in private and personal conference can work out a peaceful solution of the problem. You have agreed to confer with Mr. Taylor. During such conferences the production of coal for steel-making by the mine workers under the established wage scales of the Appalachian agreement ^{should} ~~continue~~

continue. The grand interest of the safety and defense of the nation.

If you and Mr. Taylor cannot find a better solution, two alternatives have been recommended to you and to the operators of the captive mines by the National Defense Mediation Board. Both of these are well-tested procedures for settling labor disputes which so deeply affect the public interest that continued production is essential to society. That essential public interest is now present in the production of ~~the~~ coal for steel-making.

The first procedure suggested by the Mediation Board is voluntary arbitration. The second is the procedure upon which this country relied in the war of 1917-1918 - by-partisan negotiations under the full pressure and responsibility of national emergency between equal representatives of labor and management fully empowered to act for the parties, with joint agreement on an arbitrator if such negotiations fail. These established procedures have my full approval.

I am, therefore, as President of the United States, asking you and your associated officers of the United Mine Workers of America, as loyal citizens, to ~~come now to the aid of your country by endorsing~~ *ask that* ~~the resumption of work~~ *continue* at the captive coal mines pending the settlement of the dispute, ~~in one or another of these three ways.~~

Sincerely yours,

Honorable John L. Lewis,
President, United Mine Workers
Of America.

COPY

October 26, 1941

Dear Mr. Lewis:

I acknowledge your letter of yesterday. You say that you do not feel warranted in recommending an additional extension of the temporary agreement to keep the captive mines in operation pending a final settlement of the controversy. I must ask you to reconsider this decision.

In this crisis of our national life there must be uninterrupted production of coal for making steel, that basic material of our national defense. That is essential to the preservation of our freedoms, yours and mine; those freedoms upon which the very existence of the United Mine Workers of America depends.

Mr. Myron Taylor is prepared to meet with you on Wednesday, to see if you and he in private and personal conference can work out a peaceful solution of the problem. You have agreed to confer with Mr. Taylor. During such conferences the production of coal for steel-making by the mine workers under the established wage scales of the Appalachian agreement should continue in the broad interest of the safety and defense of the nation.

I am, therefore, as President of the United States, asking you and your associated officers of the United Mine Workers of America, as loyal citizens, to come now to the aid of your country. I ask that work continue at the captive coal mines pending the settlement of the dispute.

Very sincerely yours,

s/ FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Honorable John L. Lewis
President, United Mine Workers of America,
Washington, D.C.

DRAFT

October 27, 1941.

My dear Mr. Lewis:-

I am sorry that in your letter to me early this afternoon you have not replied to my request that, in the interest of the defense of our country, the captive coal mines be kept running.

Whatever may be the issues between you and Mr. Taylor or you and Mr. Morgan, ~~it seems to me that the larger question of adequate fuel supply is of greater interest and import to the national welfare.~~

for the convenience of regulations. There is every reason for stoppage of work
~~I am informed that while some steel companies have enough coal on hand to last three or four weeks, other companies have ^{far} less stored coal. It is~~

~~probable, therefore, that even with a pro-rating of the coal now above ground, steel production must inevitably begin to be curtailed within approximately two weeks.~~

band on coffee does not mean coal it takes a long time to get them back into operation.
~~It is, therefore, essential, of course,~~

~~that the mining of coal should go on ^{your Government through me} without interruption.~~

For the third time, ~~am~~ asking you and the officers of the United Mine Workers to authorize an immediate resumption of mining.

Very sincerely yours,