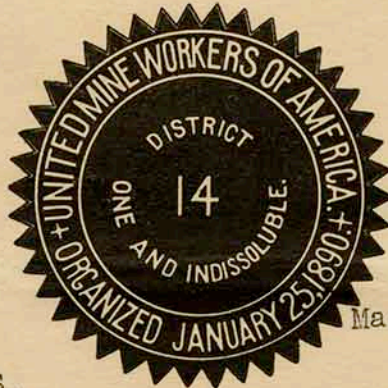


# OFFICIAL CIRCULAR

## United Mine Workers of America



May 3, 1926

OFFICERS AND MEMBERS,  
ALL LOCAL UNIONS, U.M.W.A.,  
DISTRICT NO. 14.

Dear Sirs and Brothers: -

Some few days ago a letter signed by Wulff, President Southwestern Interstate Coal Operators' Association, and Johnson, Commissioner Southwestern Interstate Coal Operators' Association, was forwarded to International President Lewis and the Presidents of the three Southwest Districts. This communication was quite lengthy and in substance, asking for a modification of the existing wage schedules. You will find below a copy of communication in reply to same, which has the indorsement of the three districts.

Indianapolis, Ind., May 1, 1926.

"Mr. Geo. J.L.Wulff, President,  
Mr. W.L.A. Johnson, General Commissioner,  
Southwestern Interstate Coal Operators' Assn.,  
Keith and Perry Building, Kansas City, Mo.

Gentlemen:

This office is in receipt of your communication, dated April 23rd, addressed to Messrs. Walters, Dalrymple, Helm and myself, requesting that consideration be given the proposition of modifying the existing wage schedules of the Southwestern Contract.

The conditions in the coal industry of which you complain largely exist in all other bituminous producing districts, including the non-union territory. Certain factors, more or less local in nature, have operated to the disadvantage of the industry in the Southwest. The demoralizing effect of such influences cannot be properly charged to the wage rates set forth in the Southwestern Agreement. It is obvious to the members of your Association that the United Mine Workers of America could not agree to a modification of the existing rates in the Southwest without agreeing to similar modifications in the wage structure throughout the entire United States. It is equally obvious that a general lowering of wage levels throughout the industry would not place the Southwestern Districts in any more advantageous position than they now occupy. As a matter of fact, Mr. W.L.A. Johnson, General Commissioner



of the Southwestern Interstate Coal Operators' Association, has stated to the writer that what the Southwestern Interstate Coal Operators' Association required was a wage reduction that would be withheld from other operating interests under contract with the organization in other fields. It is, of course, utterly impossible for the organization to accede to any such program.

It is a grave question whether the agreement in the Southwest has been carried out in good faith by the operators in general. Numerous former members of the Southwestern Interstate Coal Operators' Association have ruthlessly repudiated their contract obligations and have expended large sums of money in an endeavor to establish a non-union condition in the industry. Insofar as this office is advised such action has never encountered the official displeasure of your Association. No statement has ever been issued criticizing or condemning individual companies for their efforts to smash and destroy the jointly negotiated contract. On the other hand, there have been frequent charges that representatives of the Association were secretly condoning the nefarious practice. As a result an atmosphere of opposition to the agreement has been created, and it has been the popular practice to charge every ill and shortcoming of the industry in the Southwest to the wage provisions of the joint contract. In all fairness, gentlemen, I submit that this condition is detrimental and prejudicial to the mutual interests of the contracting parties.

It is the desire and purpose of the United Mine Workers of America, Districts 14, 21 and 25 inclusive, to carry out the provisions of the Interstate Agreement to the date of its expiration by limitation. We are convinced that such a policy is meritorious, not alone because of the obligations of the agreement, which are equally binding upon both sides, but also because a wage reduction will not prove beneficial or a remedy for the existing ills of the industry.

The United Mine Workers of America will be glad to have the full co-operation of the officers and members of the Southwestern Interstate Coal Operators' Association in carrying out the existing agreement for the period which it specifies.

Yours very truly,

John L. Lewis,  
President."

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We are also hereby advising you that beginning Saturday, May 1st, in the interest of economy, two Board Members will be laid off continuously until work in our district improves; each Board Member taking his share of the idleness. Your grievances will be handled just as promptly as possible under the conditions. We are giving you this information so that if we are a day or two late in answering your call, you will understand why.

With best wishes, we are

Fraternally yours,

M.L. WALTERS, President  
DAN O'DONNELL, Vice Pres.  
HARRY W. BURR, Secy-Treas.