THE COAL STRIKE

The magnitude and importance of the coal strike now in progress, of the United Mine Workers of America, has, I believe, never been equaled in this industry, and its duration cannot be prophesied. The strike, which began at midnight March 31, was brought on by the failure of the miners and operators to reach an agreement on the wage scale to be adopted when the old contract expired.

The miners want an interstate or national agreement, but the operators are opposed to it on the ground of economic unsoundness. The anthracite coal miners demand a 20% increase in wages over the present already high scale, while the bituminous workers, two-thirds of whom are unionized, demand the retention of the war-time wage, the minimum for which is $7.50 per day, and a six-hour day and five-day week. The operators insist that wages must come down in conformity with other industries, and in justice to the consuming public.

In reviewing the situation, it looke as if the mine workers are unwilling to accept an inevitable return to the normaletly which is bound to follow the artificial conditions existing during the war. Their demands are, in some instances, quite unreasonable.

The mines of America, more numerous than necessary to supply home consumption, are also over-manned, according to C. E. Lesher, editor of Coal Age, and this condition is the direct cause of absenteeism and the present high wage scale.

If a miner can work only three days a week and make a living, that is what he will do, and the consumers will pay for his idle days. The surplus of miners is maintained by the Union, by means of the check-off system, whereby the operator must deduct a worker’s union dues and assessments for the union before paying him his wage. As long as a man’s dues are paid the United Mine Workers guarantee him a job. To this system the operators object strenuously, and seemingly justly.

The time for the final arbitration and settlement of this dispute will come eventually. In the meantime, the supply of coal, except from the non-union bituminous fields, will be cut off. This in turn will result in a scarcity of coal and consequent high prices next winter, for which the public will pay.

The old question arises, have the unions outlived their usefulness? And the answer is no. There is a
place for unions in the modern industrial scheme, but there is also such a thing as their abusing the rights and privileges which are theirs, and to that extent are they defeating rather than aiding the purpose for which they came into being.

**PI DELTA EPSILON**

Pi Delta Epsilon, national honorary journalistic fraternity, a chapter of which was recently installed at Ohio State, should be of inestimable value in the promotion of a more healthy, co-operative journalism on the campus. Unlike some journalistic fraternities which are purely honorary in their nature, it demands, in addition to this that its members work together in the interests of all campus publications, striving at all times to raise the standards of journalistic endeavor.

The Ohio State Press Association, the organization from which the local chapter of Pi Delta Epsilon was evolved, was formed last fall by a group consisting of the editors and business managers of the leading campus publications, the nature of whose purposes and ideals were closely allied with those of the national fraternity.

One of the first steps of importance taken by the Association was to arrange a clubbing offer whereby the readers of several publications are given the benefit of a 10% to 25% reduction on subscription to two or more in the group. The details of this offer appear elsewhere in this issue.