SUMMARY OF REPORT ON BELL AND HARLAN COUNTIES,
By H. E. Bullock.

BELL COUNTY. Middlesboro Section.

Middlesboro has well organized social service agencies, including Children's Home, Red Cross Nursing Service, Boy Scouts and Red Cross Chapter, as well as Family Service Society.

Campaign just completed assuring sufficient funds to take care of all unemployment and usual requirements in this section.

No strikes in effect; no communities of social unrest; no gatherings in towns or communities of striking or unemployed miners.

Mining industry declining in activity due to exhausted properties, depressed business and little hope for improvement. Minimum wage in mines about $2.00 per day for common labour; average wages about $3.50 per day.

Plentiful crops—and many miners have turned farmers, where sufficient crops have been raised. Abundant crops also in neighboring counties of Virginia and Tennessee.

Health conditions are not unusual. There are no conditions known to Red Cross,nurse service indicating lack of food in the section. Program of educational work in proper feeding of children under way. National Red Cross has given drought relief only.

Community guarantee to take care of its unemployment and social problems this winter.

BELL COUNTY. Pineville Section.

Pineville has organized social service agencies. Red Cross has been doing relief work in connection with drought. Red Cross has not helped any striking miners nor has it been requested help by them. Will instigate campaign for relief of unemployed and helpless under direction trained worker.

No strikes in effect. Considerable social unrest stimulated by recent visit of Theodore Dreiser and party to Pineville and Straight Creek mining section, Dreiser's visit most unfortunate and harmful to county.

Mining industry declining in activity, but of considerable importance in sections, and will continue to be so for years. Considerable unemployment in mining districts, owing to depressed coal business. Average wage in coal mines about $3.50 to $4.00 per day; minimum wage paid to common labour 20¢ per hour or $1.60 per day of eight hours. Considerable reduction in wages at mines. Likewise considerable reduction in cost of living.

Farming engages about 15% of population. Farmers have had unusually good crops of ever kind. Many miners are part time farmers, and many farmers are from the mines that have closed.

Health conditions affected by epidemic of dysentery during summer not caused by poverty. Now normal through the county. Red Cross worker knows of no unusual health conditions growing out of unemployment and under nourishment.

There is considerable unemployment, and help is needed. Should mining activities decline this will be more acute. Mining companies carrying some men on over-casts amounting to relief in these cases. No conditions of serious nature in mining communities growing out of past disturbances in Harlan County. Mines are operating average of four days per week. If decreased running time is had, miners cannot earn living for families and help will be needed.

HARLAN COUNTY.

Harlan County is large coal producing section and farming is of secondary importance. Such farming is done partly by miners, and in that case miners have been helped by splendid crops. Exclusive farming population is in no need except for cash to pay taxes. Abundant crops have been raised.
Summary

Social service organisations consolidating efforts for unemployment relief and usual social service work. Red Cross has organised unit and voluntary staff of workers.

Red Cross refuses help to striking miners or unemployed miners under instructions from National Red Cross office in Washington, Intended to give help to those affected by drought only. Mine of service was hard to draw on account of mixed employment and some miners were helped.

Considerable striking and unrest past summer. Striking miners and leaders advertised that Red Cross would feed strikers and refusal of such help resulted in charges condemning Red Cross.

Many striking miners were ejected from houses and gathered in towns not controlled by mine operators. Reports that miners were being fed brought straggling people from other sections of country, hoping to be fed. Many idle men are victims of circumstances-having been intimidated and quit work for this reason. They are not Reds, Communists or trouble makers, but are so classed by mine operators and cannot find employment in county.

About 1000 men who have been connected with strikes or who are known as Socialists and Reds, or who have been unfortunately classed as such, cannot and will not find employment. These are being fed in a manner by National Miners Union, an unrecognized and unofficial union said to be sponsored by the Communist movement in America. These men and their families are in want and will continue to be so long as they are living in the county.

Mine operators are taking care of their own men; are able to give employment four to six days per week at wages lower than have been paid, but sufficient for reasonable and decent standards of living, provided rate of running time can be maintained. Any reduction in running time will result in suffering and distress that cannot be relieved locally. Mine operators have been giving unemployment relief by advancing credit to men in some cases totaling many thousands of dollars. Much of this is not recoverable and is a donation.

Mine operators refuse to contribute to any fund for the help of striking miners or labour agitators, and these people are now a charge on the county and community in which they live. All are known to operators and will not be employed.

Mine wages have been reduced, likewise the cost of living to miners. Most coal mines are running with the hope of preserving their properties only, and will consider themselves fortunate to avoid financial destruction during period of depression. Miners as a rule appreciate the conditions of the operator and are tolerant. Average wages in the mines are from $5.50 to $4.00 per day and the minimum paid for common labor is approximately $2.00 per day.

No unusual health conditions in the County. No organised County Health Department, County covered in most part by physicians attending to miners in various camps. No unusual conditions resulting from lack of food, or lack of proper food except among families of striking miners. There was distress in this group and no prospects of relief of permanent nature.

Following unfavorable running time in coal industry, acute suffering will be general, and unemployment will be too great for mine operators and local unemployment relief agencies to handle. Outside help will be badly needed.

Recent visit of Theodore Dreiser and party to Harlan County stimulated much unfavorable publicity and social unrest in the section inhabited by unemployed miners and strikers. His reports regarding wages and general conditions were untrue. The visit was most unfortunate and harmful to the country.

Cooperation of coal mining interests, welfare agencies, Red Cross and the Courts in disintegrating the elements of unrest and unemployment would seem wise, bearing in mind that the problem is one for the entire section to solve and that any improvement is for the advantage of all concerned. Unemployed people generate unrest and social disturbance, but if employed in gainful occupations, soon cease to be destructive and become constructive elements in their communities.
HELL COUNTY

MIDDLESBORO SECTION

Bell County is roughly divided into two sections, and the social service in the county is likewise divided. One section takes in the water-shed of Yellow Creek, and in the center is the City of Middlesboro, a town of 10,500 population. A meeting was held in Middlesboro on Saturday the 14th, at which were the Mayor of the city, Mr. M. S. Hollingsworth, J. S. Coleman, commissioner, R. S. Oaks, Commissioner, Mr. J. S. Brooks representative of the Kiwanis Club, Mr. Howard Douglas representative of the Rotary Club, and Mr. H. C. Williams, President of the Chamber of Commerce, and an active worker in Red Cross relief.

The Middlesboro section, which has been in the past a center of the Yellow Creek mining district, is not dominated by coal mining interests, since many coal mines in this section have either been mined out, or owing to inferior coal and bad business conditions, have ceased to operate. The mining industry is on the decline, and there is little hope for any considerable improvement of this industry in the section. Middlesboro is also the largest town within a radius of some forty miles, taking in the counties in northeastern Tennessee and southwestern Virginia, which are largely agricultural. Middlesboro has just finished a cooperative campaign covering the civic needs of its section, with a total subscription in excess of $16,000, and there is much more to come in. It is thought that this amount will meet every need in that section, and the people of Middlesboro guarantee to take care of their people affected by unemployment who reside in the section they serve, as well as to cooperate with the Pineville section of the County. The Red Cross Roll Call quota was over subscribed.

The investigation disclosed that there was no unusual distress.
in the Middlesboro section, but that there was unemployment owing to the decreased activities in the coal industry. Coal mines now operating were taking care of their men and there was no cause for distress among the coal mining people, except where coal mines had closed down permanently. Middlesboro is the center of considerable industrial activities, and while industry there is not as active as usual, there is no cause for worry and fear that people will go hungry.

The health situation is not unusual in any respect. The coal mining towns are taken care of by a reputable physician, paid by the miners for a nominal amount per month. This service includes both medical attention and medicines. There was disturbance in the Middlesboro district during the past summer, growing out of the mine strike in certain sections of Harlan County. The militia was called in at that time, and some trouble was had. This has passed away, and there are no troubles of this kind at any mines in this section. The miners are paid a minimum of about $2.00 per day for common labour, and for experienced mine work, as much as 50¢ per hour is paid. The average miner makes about $3.00 to $4.00 per day, and with working time of three to four days per week, the average family can live without any help. While there has been some shrinkage of wages per day, there has also been a reduction in the cost of food and clothing, which in a way tends to balance the situation.

Middlesboro section has a Red Cross nurse service, which is maintained by contributions of the community. This service reported that there was no unusual conditions in the section regarding health, no cases of rickets, and while there were cases of malnutrition in their section, these grew out of lack of knowledge on the part of parents and not from lack of food, or lack of availability of proper food.

Middlesboro, it will be understood, is in a non-union mining section, and the operators have never recognized any form of mine union, and no movement to organize the mines is tolerated. At this time, there is no trouble of this kind, and no disgruntled body of men or striking
miners in the section. Union miners are never knowingly hired.

There is in addition to the unemployed, the usual number of poor people who are mentally or physically deficient, and the never-do-wells who are always in distress. There is no county appropriation for helping this class of people. The Grace Nettleton Home at Harrogate, Tennessee, a home for orphan girls is used by this section and it is helped with a budget from the Community Chest. There is no other similar institution nearby in either State.

The Red Cross activities in this section were confined under instructions from the National office, to relief caused from the drouth, and while it was not always possible to draw a distinct line in this service, it was the purpose of the local Red Cross Chapter workers to serve only those so affected, and to refuse help to striking miners, or the usual unemployed miners.
Pineville takes in all that section of Bell County not in the water-shed of Yellow Creek, and consists of about two thirds of the County. In it are located the mining districts of Straight Creek, Greasy Creek, and that section of the Cumberland River adjacent to Harlan County, and as a mining field, a continuation of the Harlan Field.

The Greasy Creek field is on the decline, as mines there are practically all worked out, and will never be any more active than now. The Straight Creek district is also on the decline, but will be an active mining section for many years. The Cumberland River section is an important mining section, and is somewhat comparable with Harlan County.

In this survey, interviews were had with the following people who live in or near Pineville. Dr. Edward Wilson, who has been a practicing physician there for fifteen years, Miss Effie Blye, Secretary Red Cross, Miss Anna M. Gregory, interested Community Service worker; R. V. Trosper, County Agent, J. S. Chappel, business man, Mrs. W. C. Barley County Nurse, Reed L. Patterson, Attorney, J. N. Brooks, Mayor, Rev. L. C. Kelly, Baptist Minister, and John Brooks, Manager for Kentucky Utilities Co.

The Red Cross has maintained a paid worker in Pineville during the past season for drought relief. This worker reports that about $26,000 was spent in the county taking care of drought relief. No money or food was given to miners, or to strikers, and no requests were had from any of the mines for help. It was understood in the County that the Red Cross would not help any except those affected by the drought.

Pineville has a well organized, properly functioning Associated Charity Organization. They have not yet put on their campaign for funds but this will be done in a short time. Bell County has a population of about 38,000, of which 6,500 are farmers. County Agent, R. V. Trosper stated that this year had seen one of the best seasons for years, and
that there was an abundance of food and feed raised on the farms. The farmers are in better condition than usual, and as a class, will need no help.

Dr. Edward Wilson stated as to health in the County, that he had been pretty well over the entire county a number of times in the past summer months, and that there had been an epidemic of dysentery in the country during the season. This had resulted in many deaths in the country communities. This had been corrected, and there was now no trouble from this source. The epidemic was worse in the country where there were no sanitary toilets, and affected the mining camps very little. There were no unusual number of people reported to the County Health Nurse, Mrs. Farley, of pellagra. There had been a year ago, a large number of pellagra cases in certain sections, but through efforts of the Red Cross last year, most of these had been treated. Mrs. Farley reported that there had been no unusual conditions, and while there were many people suffering from malnutrition in the County, most of this was caused from ignorance and lack of appreciation of well balanced diet, rather than from lack of proper food.

Mr. R. L. Patterson said in regard to wages paid in the mines by the coal operators, that the average daily wage was about $3.50 per day, and that the minimum wage paid was not less than 20¢ per hour to unskilled labour. Skilled men made much more than that. It is true that the mines are not running more than an average of four days per week. Most of the mining work is piece work, loading coal by the ton. By this method a man may not make more than 20¢ or 80¢ if he desires to not do so. He loads all the coal in his working place as fast as he cares to load it, and his rate of pay per day is commensurate with what he does. The average miner will make under present wages scales from $3.00 to $6.00 per day. It was pointed out that while wages have declined, that the cost of living has also materially declined, and that the value of
a dollar in terms of food, is greater than it was a year ago.

The Civic Charity Association in Pineville thought that it would be able to handle its own cases of unemployment this season in a satisfactory way, provided the mines were able to maintain their present running time. If this was not done, it would mean considerable suffering and a burden that could not be taken care of locally. There was an immediate need of children's clothing, especially shoes in some of the rural districts. Many children were reported out of school because of lack of clothing, shoes, and school books.
A careful investigation of the social situation was made in Harlan County. Many miners were interviewed, as well as their wives, and among others the following people were interviewed: Dr. T. L. Settle, Episcopal Minister; W. W. Duffield, land owner; J. B. Snyder, Atty, and Vice Chairman Red Cross; Talmage Huff, Asst. County Supt. Schools; J. S. Green, Merchant; George Ward, Secretary Harlan Coal Operators Assn.; Ben Louellen, Hotel Manager; Wm. Wells, Carpenter; L. C. Henderson, Supt. High School; S. T. Turner, Merchant; A. B. Cornett, coal operator; Rev. W. J. Bolt, Baptist Minister; Robert Lawson, coal operator; J. B. Surgener, merchant; C. E. Vogle, Methodist Minister; Paul Meek, Supt. County Schools; Dr. J. B. Nolan, physician; C. E. Hall, real estate; F. M. Meadows, wholesaler and Chairman of Red Cross; D. H. Howard, merchant; D. N. Roller, Presbyterian minister.

Harlan County takes in all that section of the country between Pine Mountain on the North and the Tennessee line on the South, and the Virginia line on the East, comprising the drainage of the Cumberland River headwaters, and north and west of the Cumberland Mountain. It consists of the three forks of the Cumberland River and the various tributaries thereto. Practically every person in the entire County is affected directly by the coal mining industry. There is some farming, but almost all the farmers are coal miners part of the year, and depend upon this kind of work for most of their cash income. Harlan Town is the center of mining activities, and is dependant almost entirely upon the coal mines for its commercial life.

About the first of 1931, the United Mine Workers of America sent a delegation to Harlan with the view of organizing the field. One or two previous attempts to do this had met with only small success.
After some investigation, it was decided by the U.M.W. of A. that the time was not opportune to organize the Harlan field, and the delegation was removed and the attempt abandoned. On the heels of this, various organizers from Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, came into the field under the name of the National Miners Union. This latter, it appears was not an authentic body recognized by the U.M.W. of A. or the American Federation of Labour. This body of men proceeded to form an organization of miners at Evarts, near the mining camp of the Black Mountain Coal Company, a Peabody interest having large holdings in Illinois coal fields.

These organizers succeeded in getting some 150 men at the Black Mountain mine to join their Union and a strike was called for the purpose of forcing recognition of their organization. Harlan County has always operated Non-Union. Union men are sometimes employed, but the Unions are never dealt with or recognized as such. The Coal mines reserve the right to hire and discharge men employed by them for any reason, and in some instances, the so-called "Yellow-Dog" contract is resorted to in the employment of men. "The Yellow-Dog" is the name given to a contract by the miners, by which they are required to sign before they are allowed to work for the mining company. A part of this contract is an agreement in consideration of the job, on the part of the miner, that he will not join any organization of Union labor, and if he does, the operator may discharge him and immediately dispossess him of his house. Under this contract, it is much easier for the operator to dispossess a miner who lives in a company house, than under the usual legal procedure. It has been well known by all miners in the Harlan field that they would probably be discharged upon joining any Union.

The Black Mountain Coal Co. ejected all the men known or believed to belong to the Union, and a colony was established near Evarts in an attempt on the part of the Union to take care of them. Since the National Miners Union was not an accredited body, it had no support from any source, and had to resort to various means in order to feed the striking miners. Parades were held in which banners were carried
urging other miners to strike, stating that the Red Cross would feed them. The Union had little success in feeding the striking miners, and the result was hungry men, women, and children. Eventually the distress resulted in the robbing of various grocery stores. Miners who were still working were intimidated, and stopped from working. Many men who preferred to work were forced to join the ranks of the strikers. The operators fearing for the safety of their property and the lives of working men, placed guards upon their properties. Attempts to keep men from work resulted in exchange of shots between miners and guards, and finally, in serious battles in which there was loss of life on both sides, State troops were put in the section to prevent disorder after it was evident that the local authorities could not cope with the situation.

Before the strike began, in fact, about a year ago, the National Red Cross had set up a relief agency in Harlan County, with the view of taking care of drought conditions in the section. Being few farmers there was not a great deal of relief to give. The Red Cross took the position that their work was limited to drought relief only, and refused at that time to give any assistance to striking miners, or men whose unemployment was not directly caused by the drought. The Red Cross has steadily maintained that position, and no doubt this position accounts for the report that the Red Cross has and does refuse any help to the miners in the Harlan County Coal field. It was stated that there was $1600.00 in the treasury of a miner’s aid society at the Black Mountain Coal Co. and that the miners by their own choice refused to use any part of this amount for the benefit of striking miners in that camp.

The strike as above outlined spread in more or less vigorous manner to several other mining towns in the County. After several months the result is, there are no strikes at any of the mines, and the striking miners have drifted to towns that are not controlled by mining companies, "-Tins, Evarts, and similar places. The mines are working on
an average four or five days per week and there is no distress of any kind where mines are operating on this basis. The operators generally, are interested in the welfare of their men, and appreciate that they must have a living wage. Some mines are closed down because they have been exhausted, and others are in the hands of receivers. In these mines there is of course no work, and men are in more or less distress until they can get placed in other employment. The past summer has been one of low running time at the mines, and the men have taken every opportunity to plant gardens, and to farm, where it could be done. The farmers have all had good crops; are in easy circumstances, and it is thought that they will not need help. Many farmers are part time miners. These also, as a rule, are in fair condition to take care of themselves. Farm products are plentiful and cheap. There was an abundance of fruit, and every effort was made to can this by those who had it available.

Growing out of the labour unrest, and the strikes this summer there are some 1000 men living in the Independant town who will not find employment in the mines. These men are all known to the mine operators as Communists and trouble-makers, and it is useless to try to place them there. Some of these men are the victims of the conditions in the county. They are not communists, nor are they in a real sense a part of the striking element. They stopped work when the strikes began because they were afraid to keep on working. Others in this group are the worst class of communists and socialists, and there is a motley group that has come into the country because of the possibility of being able to take advantage of the situation and be fed and clothed at the expense of some one else. Many of these latter are unable to get away if they so desired, and would not work if they had the opportunity. Among this general class of people there is at this time considerable suffering for lack of proper food. The coal operators refuse to help them or
any cause that is inclined to help them. Men actively interested in the strike have been trying to take care of them, scouring that section of Kentucky and parts of Tennessee and Virginia in an attempt to find food and clothing for these people. The citizens in Harlan who are interested in Social service work, think that they should be gradually moved out of the county and placed in jobs elsewhere. Meanwhile, this group is likely to cause much trouble to the social workers.

The Central Committee, or Social Service Council in Harlan Town is not at this time properly organized, but a move is now on to organize the town to take care of its unemployed, and to care for such as are unable to care for themselves. It was disclosed that the mine operators in the County have been carrying overdrafts for their miners amounting to hundreds of thousands of dollars, most of which can never be recovered. This is main is unemployment relief. One company allows its men who have been with it for not less than five years to overdraw to the extent of $200.00 each. It has been charged that this is bondage to the man receiving the credit, but on the other hand, there is no one else to advance it, and the operator knows that much of it will never be repaid. There is no way to collect it nor to prevent the miner from moving away.

There is no organized County Health Unit. It would seem that this might be helpful. One reason for this is that much of the county is served by the mining camp physicians, who do the medical service for a nominal amount each month, from each family. This in a way covers most of the County in medical service. No report was had that there was any unusual condition of health in the County.

An organization of "Friends" is doing good work in the feeding of school children in six towns in the County. These are mining towns, but in no instance are they in camps owned exclusively by mining companies.
This organization reports that there is considerable under-nourishment among the school children they serve.

Considerable unemployment exists in Harlan County. It is mostly in the towns containing the one-time strikers; in the mining towns unable to give any running time on account of financial difficulties and in other mine towns where there is not sufficient running time to give the men adequate income.

The County Agent reports that crops are good and that there are no unemployment complications among the country people. Many of the mining towns will be able to take care of their people, but with any slight decrease in the running time a large number cannot give their men enough employment to earn food, much less to clothe their families. In this event, much suffering must take place.
Middlesboro, Bell Co., Ky.

Hello Shumate

The Ky. Mountain Laurel Festival, held the last of May or the first of June, in the Pine Mountain State Park, near the city of Pineville, is largely sponsored by the merchants and citizens of Middlesboro as well as of Pineville. This year, 1936, the Mountain Laurel Festival is being held the 28th, 29th, and 30th of May. Many thousands of visitors from all over the State and nation are expected to come and see the crowning of the queen, who will be selected from the girls of the State's universities and colleges. Ballads will be played and sung, folk dances and addresses given, and the Governor of the state is expected to be present to crown the queen with mountain laurel from our Cumberland Mountains.

Mr. R. L. Kincaid says in his editorial comment in the Monday, May 26th, issue of the Middlesboro Daily News: "Our Kentucky Mountain Laurel Festival at Pine Mountain State Park could not be more excellently timed, in order to attract visitors." (This year).

May 30th is Memorial Day, and in past years when the holiday occurred on a week-end, we have been simply swamped with visitors from far and near. With the added attraction of the Laurel Festival at this season, with the Commencement Exercises of Lincoln Memorial University (at Harrogate, Tenn., 6 mi. from Middlesboro) also featured, we should have coming this way many thousands of people.

The High and Graded Schools Commencement exercises are held each year at the Central School Auditorium, usually the third week in May. The usual commencement exercises are given, sponsored by the students and teachers.
There are speeches by the City School Superintendent, J. W. Bradner, Class Day exercises by the students, and the senior play.

The same week the Alumni Banquet is given at the Cumberland Hotel for the graduating High School Seniors by the former graduates. Also, either the following week or the next, Lincoln Memorial University has its Commencement Exercises at Duke Hall on the L. M. U. Campus at Harrogate, Tenn. At the time outstanding men from Washington D. C. and heads of prominent schools are here, and some very fine addresses are delivered.

The Tri-State Fair and Harvest Festival are sponsored by the merchants and the students and their parents of Middlesboro. The Tri-State Fair is held about the 18th or 19th of September at the Airport. There are Exhibits, carnivals, contests, and prizes awarded for the best vegetables, handmade articles, animals, etc. The Harvest Festival is an event sponsored and participated in by the schools. A queen is selected and crowned from the High School Classes, a special program is given, and prizes are then awarded at the Central School Auditorium in November.

The Elks Minstrel Show has become an annual event in Middlesboro, sponsored by the B. P. O. E. Club of Elks. This is composed of a main feature, songs, jokes, and other features by local talent. It is held either at the Manning Theater or Central School Auditorium.