

sang all together again—or at times not all together, but in three or four groups singing against each other.

In a room several floors below the hall sat the members of the General Council who were not occupied with the negotiations. Some of them whiled away the time by playing nap and solo whist. Miss Bondfield composedly worked out a difficult patience. The hours followed one another. No negotiators came.

Between ten and eleven spirits were raised by a telephone message from the House of Commons. MacDonald and Thomas were hopeful; they thought a solution had been found. But soon after eleven came news that there had been a breakdown. Baldwin had gone away saying "All off." In that case the Trade Union negotiators would soon arrive.

They arrived just before midnight, weary, hoarse. They explained to their fellow members of the General Council what had happened. Then all trooped upstairs for the explanation to be repeated to Congress after its thirteen hours' wait.

Pugh said a few words first. It was over a single word, he explained, that the breakdown had occurred—the word "initiate." The miners insisted that the Cabinet should initiate the reorganisation of the coal industry. The meaning was clear enough. The Cabinet was to see that the owners put changes in hand and should, if need be, pass Acts to enforce these changes. The Cabinet had refused to give such an undertaking.

Thomas was chief spokesman.

"I have never in my life," he said, and his voice was almost a sob, "begged and pleaded for peace as I have pleaded and begged to-day."

"There were sinister influences at work," Thomas declared.

He produced an O.M.S. leaflet announcing that a State of Emergency had been proclaimed, issued in anticipation of this being done. He spoke of the request by Conservative Headquarters to newspapers on Monday, April 26th, to lay stress upon the need for an increase of miners' working hours.

"We met the Government on Monday," Thomas