

New York, N.Y.,
June 22, 1920.

Mr. Ernest T. Trigg, President,
National Federation of Construction Industries,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Mr. Trigg:

Your telegram of the 21st was received this morning. Previous engagements which I have in New York will prevent my going to Washington in the event of a call.

It would seem that housing has been recognized as an essential in view of the rent laws and rent commissions under federal, state and municipal jurisdiction, which are regulating this essential even more drastically than food, fuel or clothing are regulated by governmental authorities. The Interstate Commerce Commission, however, does not appear to consider housing as an essential in view of the recent order giving preference to the shipment of coal which amounts to an embargo against the transportation of building materials.

Do we know the amount of the fuel shortage? The New York Sun, on June 19th, reported this year's production of anthracite coal as being three million tons in excess of that of last year's. According to the United States Geological Survey, the production of anthracite for the year ending June 5th was 36,398,000 tons, as compared with 33,351,000 tons last year. The production of bituminous coal up to April amounted to 37,966,000 tons, as compared with 32,166,000 tons for the corresponding period last year.

It is said that all traffic must now give way to the delivery of coal to the northwest and then to New England. A government transport is leaving New York today for Boston with 10,000 tons. The New York papers state today that the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company has not enough fuel for two days and has appealed to the President.

Is the Interstate Commerce Commission acting on these matters on its own initiative or is it taking advice from some other body? My own hunch is that T. Dewitt Cuyler, Chairman of the Railway Executives Committee, is handing out the "done" and either we do not understand the urgency of

the housing situation, particularly in New York where work must be done during the next three months or else be seriously delayed this year. If it is a question of an embargo on building materials or an embargo on the exporting of coal, it would seem to me preferable to adopt the latter as being the least detrimental to our national interests.

My feeling with regard to injunction proceedings is that this should not be undertaken by the Federation, as it has not got the funds to continue it, and it would appear to me to be more desirable that these proceedings should be initiated by some individual or member organization.

Very truly yours,