

60 MEN ARE CAUGHT IN A BURNING MINE

All Hope of Rescue from Pan-coast Colliery, Near Scranton, Is Early Abandoned.

MANY BODIES RECOVERED

Only One Worker Brought Out Alive
—His Safety Due to Mere Chance.

Special to The New York Times.

SCRANTON, April 7.—Between sixty and seventy-five mine workers, of whom a few were boys, lost their lives in the Dunmore, also called the China, vein, of the Pan-coast colliery, at Throop, to-day. The work of rescue is still in progress. Twenty bodies have been brought to the surface. It is not believed that any of the entombed men will be found alive. Most of them were foreigners, speaking little if any English. Several mine officials, however, are among the victims. Those known to be in the affected chamber are: KNIGHT, WALTER, mine foreman. DAWE, ISAAC, fire boss. BALLOG, GEORGE, aged 30, miner; Throop. KASO, ADAM, aged 36, miner; Throop. OLORKY, STEPHEN, aged 16, driver boy; Throop. McWATER, THOMAS, WALLACE, JAMES, LUCAS, HENRY, GALL, MICHAEL, EVANS, JOSEPH M., Federal life saver; BERRY, JOHN R., City Councilman; MAY, JOHN, ROTHWELL, HARRY.

The other bodies discovered are those of foreigners.

The Dunmore vein is 750 feet below the surface, a fact which greatly impedes the work of rescue, making fire-fighting difficult. The colliery is owned by the Scranton Coal Company, affiliated with the New York, Ontario & Western Company.

The fire which caused the mine horror was due to some unknown cause, and began in the engine house at the foot of the shaft, about 10 o'clock this morning. Many attribute it to spontaneous combustion. At that time there were 300 men and boys in the various veins and chambers of the mine.

The flames set off various accumulations of gas, which increased the difficulty, and doubtless increased the loss of life. The crowds about the mine are seething with excitement. It was difficult to obtain a coherent statement from any one. About the head of the shaft were thousands of people, including the relatives and friends of the men entombed. Ropes had to be stretched to keep back the throng and to prevent a stampede when the bodies were brought out.

The company officials acted with the greatest promptness when they learned the extent of the disaster. But once started, the fire spread with remarkable rapidity. It caught in the timbering of the shaft and spread along the gangway. It seized upon everything that it could devour, and interposed its wall of flame between the men who were in the distant chambers of the Dunmore vein and upper sections. As soon as it was seen that the fire was baffling the efforts to subdue it, word was sent for the Government rescue car at Kingston, sixteen miles distant, and this was hurried forward at once, bringing four men equipped with apparatus, including helmets resembling those of divers, for penetrating into smoke and the dreaded fire damp. This was the first test of the rescue car and its crew. The helmeted men were the only ones that could enter the affected gangways up to a later hour, and they recovered the bodies found.

The only man brought out alive from the zone of the fire was Joseph Vickers, a fire boss. Shortly after 10 o'clock Vickers, finding the fire was becoming dangerous, ran down the gangway, accompanied by a companion, to give the alarm. Before they had gone far their lights went out. Vickers realized his danger and started back. He missed his companion. He managed to get by the worst place on his return, but had gone only a little way beyond it when he was overcome by smoke. Hours later he was found by the fire-fighters. It was a long while before he recovered consciousness. He told the mine officials that there was absolutely no hope for the other men in the mine.

"They perished hours ago," he said. "Nobody could live many minutes in such a place. The workings are filled with smoke, and there is no way for the entombed men to get air."

The three bodies first recovered were found only a short distance from the fire, showing that the men who were driven to the end of the workings to escape the smoke have absolutely no chance of escape.

Joseph Birtley, mine foreman of the Scranton Coal Company, directed the fire-fighting and rescue work. Later he was joined by General Supt. William L. Allen, Outside Foreman John E. Jones, and Inside Foreman Paul Bright. They summoned the company's available fire-fighting force and also all the carpenter force. For a time great effort was being made to get as much air as possible into the gangway where the miners were imprisoned. To do this all the other portions of the mine were shut down.

One of the Government rescue men at 4:15 o'clock said that the fire in the Dunmore vein had just been put out, and they were about to proceed in search of the missing. It was a little after this that the three bodies were found, but they were not far from the shaft. They must have struggled to the places where they were found in a desperate dash for safety.

Joseph Evans, in charge of the Government rescue car, was suffocated, owing to the fact that his helmet was defective, and died to-night.

An explanation of the spread of the fire was made in the statement that, owing to the depth of the Dunmore vein, it was afternoon before it was possible to get water on the fire. When a hose was finally turned on the blazing chamber the firemen worked at great personal danger. Later, the rescue squads had to proceed with the greatest caution, otherwise their lives would have been added to those lost. Other of the mining companies sent officials and offers of assistance to the Pan-coast Mine, but as many men as could be used were already available. Assistance was accepted from eight members of the Lackawanna First Aid crew.

It was announced at 10 o'clock to-night that the rescue party had found between sixty and seventy bodies, far down in the China, or Dunmore vein, about 2,000 feet from the shaft, where the victims had evidently retreated for safety.

Among the dead is John R. Perry, Councilman of the First Ward of this city, who volunteered to aid in the work of rescue. At a late hour the bodies of the dead were being collected and piled at the foot of the shaft.

Charles Enzian, the noted mining expert, in general charge of mine rescue work for the Federal Government, who came on from Wilkesbarre, was also overcome and is in a serious condition to-night.

Joseph R. Dickson, President of the Scranton Coal Company, said last night at his home in Morristown, N. J.:

"From information available it is not possible to tell how the fire started. It is probable that one of the men employed around the engine house threw a lighted cigarette or cigar into a pile of oil-soaked waste, or the fire may have started from an overheated journal; but this is highly improbable, because the overheating of a journal is always detected before it reaches the danger point. "No precaution known to mining science was omitted at this mine. I simply cannot understand how the thing happened."