

Chief of the United States Bureau of Mines, has also undertaken an investigation on behalf of the Federal Government. He has appointed as investigators George Enzian, in charge of the United States Rescue Station in Wilkesbarre; D. W. Roberts, head of the Pittsburg Station, who came with Dr. Holmes from Philadelphia last night, and Henry G. Davis, District Superintendent of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western mines. Coroner James F. Saltry and County Detective M. A. Rafter are also making an investigation to fix responsibility.

#### Fire's Origin Unknown.

No one has as yet told how the fire started. It is supposed to have had its origin in some oil-soaked cotton waste in the engine room. This is merely guess-work, however.

About twelve of the victims were men of English speech, and the boys, whose ages range from 14 to 16, were of about equal number. The remaining fifty were for the most part Hungarians and Poles.

The officials of the Federal Mine Rescue Service refuse to believe that there was any defect in the helmet worn by Joseph Evans, leader of the rescue car, when he went to his death. Evans, the first man of the service to perish on duty, overtaxed the capacity of the apparatus, and while well in the lead of his two fellow-rescuers, collapsed. His companions say he tugged madly at the helmet, probably feeling asphyxiation coming on, and succeeded in tearing it from his head. This left him exposed to the very smoke and gas, or "after damp," that killed the men he was seeking to rescue.

The work of relieving the distress of the victims' families is well under way. Mayor John Von Bergen has made an appeal for immediate contributions. The Mayor called a meeting of prominent citizens this afternoon at a local bank to take charge of the relief fund. They learned from the coal company officials that the miners' "keg fund" will take care of the burial expenses, and that the company will for the present supply food to the victims' families from its store.

The mine rescue car which came to Throop yesterday was dispatched to-day to the scene of the Alabama mine horror.

The Pennsylvania Legislature is still in session and it is likely that further legislation to protect miners and mine property will be presented as a result of new lessons learned in this mine horror.

#### 74 DEAD IN MINE FIRE.

All Bodies Recovered from the Pancoast Colliery at Throop, Penn.

SCRANTON, Penn., April 8.—From the depths of the Pancoast Colliery at Throop, where a fire started yesterday, the bodies of seventy-four miners have been recovered—the total death toll of the disaster. The last group of dead, comprising seven men, were brought up a little before noon to-day. The first body was taken out at 10 o'clock last night.

As fast as the bodies were identified they were tagged, and if relatives did not come to claim them they were turned over to undertakers, who fought so for the bodies that the police had to interfere.

A canvass of the families of the victims shows 45 widows and 137 orphans. About every other house in the village had crêpe on its door, and in some houses there are more than one corpse. John Stoyak and his two sons and cousin lost their lives, and in one foreigner's house seven children are made orphans. The funerals will probably be held on Monday.

In the number of victims this is the worst mine horror that has ever occurred in the Lackawanna Valley region, and the worst in the whole anthracite coalfields since the Avondale disaster of Sept. 6, 1899, when 119 men lost their lives.

Many explanations are offered as to how the Pancoast victims came to their death, but none is as yet generally accepted. One contributing cause, it is said, was the failure of inside mine bosses to realize the imminence of danger to the men in the tunnel until it was too late for them to get out.

The fire started shortly after 9 o'clock. Mining operations continued until 11 o'clock, as it was not until then that the danger was realized.

#### Foreman Gives the Alarm.

Walter Knight, the foreman, and Isaac Dawe, a fire boss, gave an alarm to the different veins and then started in to notify the tunnel men to get out. On the way they met John R. Perry, a Scranton Councilman, who was a miner and who, with his laborer, was coming out of the slope, having finished their shift. When told of the fire, Perry told his laborer to rush out and he did so.

Perry and the two bosses went in toward the tunnel workings, a thousand feet ahead. Little concern was given them by officials and miners who were fighting the fire.

"Walt Knight is with them," they said, "and they will be all right. Knight will take them out the air shaft."

Knight knew the mine as well as he did his own home, but he did not take out the tunnel men. With Dawe and Perry he perished with the men they went in to warn and direct to safety. They had underestimated the danger. The smoke and poisonous "white damp," which follows a fire in the mines, overtook them.

There was a way—a winding, devious way—to the second opening, but this was probably filled with smoke and white damp before the men could get well started on their journey through it. Some attempted to come back in the direction of the fire. Some got a considerable distance in the other direction. None got anywhere near safety, however.

They fell in their tracks or lay down exhausted, burying their faces in the wet culm to avoid the choking smoke and deadly gas. Some stuffed wet handkerchiefs in their mouths. Some were found huddled under sheets of canvas, used largely in the mines in constructing air courses.

#### Start an Investigation.

James E. Roderick, Chief of the State Department of Mines, arrived to-day, and, with Inspectors David Williams, P. J. Moore, and H. O. Prytherch, will investigate the cause of the catastrophe.

"If proper care had been taken there would have been no fire," Mr. Roderick said. "I am afraid there was too much delay, but I also think that the men were dead in less than half an hour. The men could not have lived five minutes in 'white damp' and smoke that replaced the air in the chambers. The consequence is that there was no great suffering."

"I did not believe that there was a hard coal mine in Pennsylvania in which such an accident could have happened. I want to say now that it should not have happened. The engine house should have been constructed of incombustible material. I do not know of any law except common sense that demands this. However, the law ought to demand it. If proper care had been taken, there would have been no fire."

Dr. J. A. Holmes of Washington, D. C.,