

22 MEN SMOTHER

**Terrible Disaster at the Smug-
gler-Union Mine.**

**Over a Score of Miners Known
to Have Been Killed.**

**Many More Were in the Mine
and May Be Dead.**

AT BULLION TUNNEL.

**Fire Started and Spread to All
Buildings.**

**Smoke Was Drawn Directly Into
the Tunnel.**

**Two Hundred Men Had Gone in
Before Fire Started.**

Telluride, Col., Nov. 21.—Nearly a hundred men were probably suffocated in the Smuggler-Union mine in Marshall Basin as a result of a fire which consumed the buildings at the mouth of the Bullion tunnel. Twenty-two miners are known to be dead and scores of others are in the mine workings either suffocated or seeking safety in remote parts of the mine until the place is cleared of foul gases and smoke.

Fire broke out in the tramway bunk house at the mouth of the Bullion tunnel, the principal opening from which the property is worked and spread rapidly to the boiler and engine house, blacksmith shop, the tramway terminal with its great ore bins and several smaller buildings, were all soon wrapped in flames.

A strong draft drew the smoke from the burning buildings directly into the tunnel and the miles of drafts, up-raises and slopes connecting with it began to fill rapidly with the smoke. In the excitement of trying to corral the fire in the outside buildings, the mine was forgotten and before the situation was realized the workings were fast filling with dense smoke. By this time the buildings about the mouth of the tunnel were all ablaze and nothing could be done to stop the smoke from going in.

As soon as it was possible, great bodies of rock were blown down into the tunnel mouth and the opening stopped, but not until the workings were filled and the smoke working its way through the shafts to the surface a mile or more up the mountain from the tunnel house.

The day shift, some 200 men, had gone into the mine and reached their stations before the fire started. It is known that some of the men escaped through the old Sheridan tunnel and also through the old Union workings, but they are thought to have been but a small part of the force in the mine.

The Smuggler-Union is the largest mine in the Telluride district, the output being about two-thirds of the total from the camp. It is owned by New York and Boston capitalists.

Persons who have come into town this morning from the Smuggler-Union mine, which is four miles distant between Marshall Gulch and the mountains, say the workers have almost abandoned hope of finding any of the imprisoned men alive. Every entrance to the property is the scene of active work and the willing hands are only stayed by fear of certain death if they enter the smoke filled levels.

Every few minutes men make a rush inside, only to crawl back helpless and strangling as they meet the foul smoke which fills the tunnels and levels.

The officers refuse to talk, either in giving information or in expressing opinions as to the likelihood of early rescue of the unfortunates yet in the mine. They will only say that the work will be continued until every body has been recovered and will be hastened in the hope that many may be found alive.

The telegraph and telephone wires were destroyed by fire and the only means of communication is by messenger.

ESTIMATED LOSS \$18,000.

Denver, Nov. 21.—The damage caused by the fire in the loss of the buildings at the Smuggler-Union mine is estimated at \$18,000, but the mine will have to be closed for at least a month.

The mouth of the Bullion tunnel, through which the Smuggler-Union mines are worked, is located not over 50 or 60 feet from the burned buildings. The smoke from the start seemed to be drawn to the mouth of the tunnel, and it encircled that point as if there were no other place of escape. This was due to suction, as the air in the mine was warmer than that outside. On account of the suction movement, the majority of mine and tunnel entrances have iron doors ready to lower in place at a minute's notice to stop smoke or fire. Unfortunately the Bullion tunnel did not possess one of these safeguards.

It appears that much of the stupefying effect of the fire was due to the flames in the converter house, which was saturated with oil and which emitted the darkest smoke imaginable. The tunnel is situated about midway between the top or apex of the mine and the ninth level. It is an intermediate working tunnel. The seventh level is 1,750 feet below the surface, and the ninth level, where between 75 and 90 miners were working when the fire occurred, is 2,000 feet below the surface. At last accounts all attempts to explore this level had been frustrated by the smoke. Seventeen of the twenty-two bodies recovered were found in the seventh level. The fire did not penetrate the mine workings, and the frightful loss of life was due entirely to smoke.

HISTORY OF THE MINE.

The mine was originally owned by a company, of which John Porter of this city was president, and A. H. Fowler, secretary and treasurer. About two years ago, the mine, with a number of others in the same locality, was absorbed by the New England Exploration company, of which B. J. Lawrence is now the head and one of the principal stockholders. The New England company is controlled by Boston capitalists. Mr. Lawrence went to New York about a week ago. Arthur Collins, manager of the mine, is also absent on a trip to Mexico. Jacob Filins, attorney for the

company, left for Telluride last night to make an investigation.

The executive board of the Western Federation of Miners, now in session in this city, discussed the disaster at their meeting today. The members all hold the opinion that the loss of life was the result of criminal negligence. The wooden buildings, they said, should not have been so close to the tunnel. They also averred that agitation would commence in labor circles to procure legislation which would remedy the evils which caused the fire at the Smuggler mine.

In 1878, a snow slide occurred just above Bullion tunnel in which 27 people lost their lives and it was here on July 3 last that the fighting, consequent upon the strike of Smuggler miners, occurred. It is said that the company would now be employing 1,000 men were it not for the trouble last summer.

The Smuggler-Union mines have produced nearly \$20,000,000.

ALL INSIDE ARE DEAD.

Denver, Nov. 21.—A special to the Post from Telluride, Colo., says:

The work of rescuing bodies of miners who were suffocated to death in the Smuggler-Union mine yesterday morning was resumed at 9 o'clock this morning. The searching parties were unable to work last night, owing to the dense volumes of sulphur gas which permeated every portion of the eighteen miles of underground workings. It is not expected that all of the bodies will be recovered before midnight and it may take even longer. How many bodies remain in the mine is simply a matter of conjecture. The full number of dead will not be known until a complete roster of the employees has been secured and those who escaped accounted for. There may be fifty more bodies in the mine. It is certain that every man who was imprisoned in the mine is dead; no living being could exist in the awful sulphur fumes for more than a few minutes.

The work of bringing down the bodies of the victims was slow and laborious, the steep trail making it very difficult to carry the bodies. The bodies were placed upon improvised stretchers and then raised upon the shoulders of twelve stalwart miners and brought to the coroner's office where they were laid out in rows. From 150 to 200 men were engaged in this work. Horgelson and Barkley sacrificed their lives in a vain attempt to save the lives of their mine associates. They had ample warning of the fire and could easily have escaped from the tunnel. Instead they went back into the workings and spread the alarm. They succeeded probably in warning only a very few of the men in the mine before they were themselves overcome by the deadly sulphur fumes.

The coroner will hold an inquest on but one body, the verdict in this case being deemed sufficient to cover all of the casualties.

A large crowd began gathering at the Smuggler-Union mine early this morning, every man volunteering to join the rescue parties. Only the most experienced miners have been chosen for this dangerous work, and up to 9 o'clock those selected were busy making preparations to safeguard themselves in case large bodies of smoke and sulphur gas should be encountered in the workings as the search for the dead progressed. At that hour the first rescue party entered the workings. Their progress is slow and it will be several hours, it is thought, before any more bodies are encountered.

Many of the victims were married men and left families. There is already talk of raising a relief fund for the widows and orphans and it is quite likely that the state at large will be asked to assist the people of Telluride in caring for those who have so suddenly been bereft of their support.