

SHIFLETT IS AT WORK

Investigating the Cause of
The Fraterville Mine
Explosion.

Request to Re-open Thistle
Mine Again Refused
By Him.

Operations at Graysville and Sale
Creek Mines Ordered Stopped.
Coal Creek Relief.

(By Staff Correspondent.)

Coal Creek, Tenn., May 26.—The story has been written and the tale has been told. Little more can be related from the little mining village of Coal Creek, stricken so deeply by the horrible catastrophe which occurred last Monday morning at the Fraterville mine of the Coal Creek company.

Outside of the unusual demonstration of sorrow and mourning called out Sunday by the full realization of the awful loss to the community and the subsequent explanation of the work undertaken by State Labor Commissioner R. A. Shiflett there are no developments worthy of note.

The latter point deserves some space:

"The explosion which occurred a week ago today," stated Mr. Shiflett to the staff correspondent of The Journal and Tribune, "was not a dust explosion, but one caused by gas. I have held that theory from the first and now I am convinced it is the correct one."

This statement was made by Mr. Shiflett shortly after he had made a trip through the mine in which so many miners breathed their last. Accompanying him were Lew Card, John H. Bullock, J. F. Lynch, William Williams, Millard Phillips and George M. Camp, the latter superintendent of the mine. Today Mr. Shiflett received a detailed report on the matter from Lew Card, William Williams and William Lewis, whom he had appointed to investigate the cause of the explosion and superintend the opening of the mine. The trip through the Fraterville was the result of the report,

In continuing his statement after the trip Mr. Shiflett said: "We found that the explosion has ruptured and wrecked the mine in many places and the investigation begun today, which will not be stopped until it is thorough and complete, will be proceeded with cautiously, as the walls are bratticed and the air is forced in. Leaks are discoverable in many places in the brattices built to repair the explosion's damage and there are three or four bad leaks in the walls between the Fraterville and the old abandoned Knoxville Iron company's plant from which gas flows into the former mine in evil quantities. These things I have ordered repaired immediately and I have set a force at work fulfilling those instructions. It is impossible to extend this work of investigation to the taking of depositions until the preliminary work is completed, hence it will be three or four days before I get that far advanced."

In regard to the condition to the atmosphere in the mine now Mr. Shiflett stated: "At the entrance to the mine this morning the 'outgo' furnished a 10.0001 cubic feet pressure going at a good velocity. About 800 feet farther into the interior, beyond the intake, the measurement exceeded that amount by 349 cubic feet. When these pressures are supported by the repairs I have suggested today they will be amply safe for at least 100 workmen, but just now I do not want men at work in either the Thistle of Fraterville."

It was in accordance with this latter idea that Mr. Shiflett today refused for the second time permission to reopen operation of the Thistle at once.

Aroused by this awful affair Mr. Shiflett telegraphed orders to the Fox Creek Coal & Coke company and the Sale Creek Coal company Sunday, ordering further operations at the Graysville and Sale Creek mines to be stopped until certain reports of dangerous conditions were examined into. Instructions were made for the necessary inspection by him at the same time, hence these orders will only delay the producing capacity of the two mines named temporarily.

Business nor social life has yet recovered from the shock and the town is badly crippled, but the systematic work of relief and the steady tone of optimism maintained generally promise that this apathy will soon wear off and Coal Creek will leave its sorrow to the past.

BEAUMONT.