

PREPARE TO OPEN VAST SEPULCHRE

Mine at Cherry Wherein 200
Bodies Have Lain Since
Nov. 13 to Be Searched.

GRUESOME SIGHT EXPECTED

Relatives Protest Against De-
stroying Bodies and Demand
Christian Burial.

[BY ASSOCIATED PRESS TO GAZETTE TIMES.]

CHERRY, ILL., Jan. 30.—The little coal mining town of Cherry is steeling itself to undergo the ordeal of exhumation that is expected this week following the promised unsealing tomorrow or Tuesday of the St. Paul mine, in which the bodies of more than 200 coal miners have been entombed since November 13, when fire caused the death of some 350 men.

A snowstorm is blowing and the oxygen helmet men have not arrived from the University of Illinois, so the prospects tonight are that the lid which has kept the mine closed for two months will not be pried off the shaft mouth before Tuesday. As it is not certain that the fire in the mine is extinguished, nothing definite towards the recovery of the bodies will be planned until experts protected with oxygen helmets have explored the shaft.

If conditions are propitious the fan will be started to suck in fresh air. Also any smouldering fire will have to be extinguished and 2,000,000 gallons of water pumped from the third level.

It is thought that about 40 bodies are floating on this water in the bottom of the mine and around 200 other corpses, it is estimated, are huddled in the second level. The condition of the bodies is causing as much concern as are the engineering problems attendant on uncapping the mine. It has been suggested that much gruesomeness could be avoided by destroying the cadavers in the mine galleries with chemicals. This proposal, unofficially made, has met with bitter opposition from the widows, mothers and children of the dead miners. They plead that all they now hope for is to look once more on the form of a beloved relative, to give that body a Christian burial and to recover some personal token.

Tentative arrangements are in progress for burials. Men have been engaged to dig a row of graves nearly a quarter of a mile long.