

WOMEN BIND HEARTS FOR OPENING TOMB

Widows and Children to Undergo
Ordeal at Mouth of Cherry
Mine This Week.

RESENT BURNING CADAVERS

Relatives Plead for Chance to
Look Once More on Faces of
Explosion Victims.

CHERRY, Ill., Jan. 30.—Nearly every woman in Cherry is drawing her heart-strings tight 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 more than two hundred coal miners have lain entombed since Nov. 13, when fire caused the death of about three hundred and fifty men.

With a snowstorm beating over the prairie and the helmet men not yet arrived from the University of Illinois, the prospects tonight are that the lid which has kept the mine tightly 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 toward the recovery of the bodies will be planned until experts, protected with oxygen helmets, have explored the shaft. If conditions prove propitious the fan will be started to suck in fresh air. Any smoldering fire will have to be extinguished and 27,000,000 gallons of water pumped from the third level.

Hundreds Still in Tomb.

It is thought about forty-five bodies are lying in the water in the bottom of the mine. Upward of two hundred corpses are said to be huddled in the second level. The condition of the bodies is causing as much concern as are the engineering problems attendant on the uncapping of the mine and the cleaning of the debris from the subterranean passages. It has been suggested that much of the grewsomeness of the situation could be avoided by destroying the cadavers in the mine galleries with chemicals.

This proposal, unofficially made, has met with bitter opposition on the part of the widows, mothers and children of the dead miners. They contend 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 of the decedent.

Dig Row of Graves.

Tentative arrangements are already making for funerals and burials. Men have been engaged to dig a row of graves nearly a quarter of a mile long. W. W. Taylor, manager of the St. Paul Mine Company, does not offer much hope that the mine will be emptied of its dead before the end of the week, as much preliminary work must be done.

It is even possible that the fire might break out afresh and force the resealing of the mine for another long period. Tests made last week for fire and gases, however, indicate that the work of clearing the mine could go forward.