

# BIG EXPLOSION OCCURED EARLY TODAY--RESULTS NOT YET KNOWN

**Layland Mine Near Thurmond, W. Va., Is Thought To Be  
Great Death Trap—Huge Volumes Of Smoke Make  
It Impossible To Investigate Disaster.**

## GREAT EXCITEMENT AMONG THE PEOPLE

**Rescue Parties Are Formed, Doctors and Ambulances Are  
Rushed to the Scene by Coal Company.**

(Special to The West Virginian.)

CHARLESTON, W. Va., March 2.—That between 175 and 180 men were entombed in Layland mine number three, owned and operated by the New River and Pocahontas Consolidated Coal Co., which is controlled by the Berwind-White syndicate of Philadelphia, is practically the only information obtainable from Layland, at the companies offices here.

From the department of mines, the local offices were advised this forenoon that an explosion had occurred at the Layland mine number three at 8:25 this morning, but that the extent of the explosion was not known.

Layland is on the Laurel Creek branch of the Chesapeake and Ohio railroad, six miles up the creek from Quinnimont. The offices and store are at the foot of the mountain, while the mine is entered at the top of a long incline.

The officials of the company have gone into the mine, according to the company's bookkeeper at Layland, but beyond that and the statement that the fan is an eighteen foot one with a 75,000 cubic foot air capacity per minute.

District Inspectors John I. Absolom and L. B. Holiday are on their way to the scene of the explosion, but will not be able to reach there until some time this afternoon.

R. Y. Muir, who was an inspector for many years under Chief Mine Inspector John Laing, and under Earl Henry, the present head of the department, has been for several months in charge of the inspection of mines for the New River and Pocahontas Consolidated Coal Company, and his last inspection of this mine was on February 26, the last inspection by the department of mines was on January 19, by Inspector Absolom when he reported no gas mine in damp condition and well ventilated.

Chief Henry of the department of mines could give no reason for the explosion whether by gas or some other cause. The inaccessibility of the place is causing delay in getting any information. The majority of the miners employed at Layland are foreigners. The mine has been in operation about six years.

## SMOKE HINDERS RESCUE WORK.

(By Associated Press.)

**HINTON, W. Va., March 2.**—Great volumes of smoke are pouring out of mine number three, where an explosion occurred this morning.

As it is directly connected with mine number 4, it was feared that the men there had also felt the force of the blast. Throngs of excited people hurried from nearby mining towns and rescue parties were formed to penetrate the workings in the hope that some of the entombed men might be found alive.

After repeated attempts one rescue party penetrated the main drift at No. 3, for a distance of about 100 feet, and there found an unidentified miner still living but unconscious. His legs had been broken and doctors said he probably would die.

The mine where the explosion occurred is a drift, high up on Quinnimont mountain, and is in charge of H. M. Bartlet, as general manager.

## RESCUE CARS ON WAY TO SCENE.

(By Associated Press.)

**PITTSBURGH, Pa., March 2.**—George Rice, chief engineer of the Pittsburgh station of the Bureau of Mines upon receipt of the news that an explosion occurred near Thurmond, W. Va., ordered rescue car No. 8, at Glenallum, W. Va., to proceed at once to the place, picking up volunteers along the way, as it was feared many would be needed in the work of rescue.

Arrangements were also made to have the rescue car in Pittsburgh held in readiness should it be needed.

James E. Paul, chief engineer in charge of rescue work left for Thurmond, W. Va., on the first train and Rice prepared to follow tonight.

(By Associated Press.)

**HINTON, W. Va., March 2.**—As the day wore on additional volunteers entered the mine and two forces of 20 men each were clearing away the fallen coal and rock in the main entry of Mine No. 3. Half a mile from the opening they came across another miner badly hurt and unable to tell anything about the explosion. Here they encountered a mass of debris and it was said that two or three hours must elapse before it could be removed and the rockings beyond penetrated.