

FIRE BLAZING IN DEPTHS OF RAIMUND MINE

Flames Eating Away Wood-
en Supports In Ore Shaft
Of Republic Steel

ONE STRICKEN BY GAS

Bessemer Worker Suffers
From Poisoning; Origin
Is Not Determined

Fire blazed today in the depths of the Raimund Ore Mine of Republic Steel Corp., three and a half miles southeast of Bessemer, while crews of miners wearing gas masks fought futilely against the spread of the flames.

One worker was in Bessemer General Hospital, overcome by carbon monoxide gas. He was Russell Crotwell, 32, of 2605 Exeter-av, Bessemer. His condition was only fair.

Started Saturday

The fire, which started late Saturday, was centered about a half mile back in the mine from the bottom of the main shaft, W. H. Oldham, district manager for Republic, said.

Mr. Oldham said the origin of the blaze had not been determined.

"It is a slow fire, eating away at the timbers put up through all the mine passages as supports," he said. "There is no telling how long it will continue to burn. The only inflammable material present is the wooden supports."

With the supports burned away a rock fall occurred yesterday far back in the mine. No workers were near at the time but the danger of further falls was constant.

The miners presented an eerie picture, equipped with gas masks and with their carbide lamps sending out tiny flames in the smoke-filled mine 1400 feet below the surface.

A representative of the Federal Bureau of Mines accompanied a crew into the mine to ascertain the extent of the blaze.

A compressed air apparatus was sent down to dissipate the smoke and clear the way for mine crews to fight the flames.

The mine is more than two miles long. Mine crews were unable to penetrate more than three-quarters of a mile from where they entered because of the smoke and intense heat.

Work Is Halted

Miners were unable to enter the shaft except for brief periods on account of the dense smoke.

In spite of the fire, the mine's pumps remained in operation, keeping the lower passages free of seepage water.

The fire halted ore mining operations which have been maintained at a continuous pace for the last few years.