

RESCUED MINERS DESCRIBE TUNNEL PRISON

Courage of Mine Boss Kept Men Cheerful During Wait

BULLETIN

IRONWOOD, Mich., Sept. 30 (United Press).—Forty three miners, rescued last night from their tomb in the G. Pabst mine, today were recuperating rapidly despite the almost seven days of confinement.

Today they were fed on soft foods at the hospital where they were taken after being led from the shaft last night. Thin soups and custards comprised their menu.

Doctors examined the miners this morning and reported it was a miracle all had escaped alive.

IRONWOOD, Mich., Sept. 30 (United Press).—This little iron mining town of some 18,000 souls was still in a high state of elation today over the return to its arms last night of 43 trapped workers from the dark and chilly bowels of the earth.

One at a time, the half-starved miners were rescued from the tortures of nearly six days' imprisonment in a rock prison more than 700 feet underground.

The men crawled through a long, sloping shaft to the 26th level of the G. Pabst iron mine where an elevator lifted them to freedom.

Praise Their Boss

They told a stirring story of an uncertain battle for survival and spoke words of praise for Captain Thomas Trewartha, 67-year-old mine boss, who refused to leave his prison until his men got out first.

The miners said they prayed, talked religion, sang songs, and worked during the trying period.

They had plenty of water but it was not good. They boiled it before drinking, using, at the last, their clothes for fuel. For light, they drained the kerosene from the tail lights of mine cars and used this in their lamps when the supply of carbide gave out. For wicks, they tore up portions of their clothing.

Made Tea from Bark

They stripped the bark from the birch shaftings of the mine and made tea. They sang their songs in several languages and employed divers schemes to break the monotony.

Realizing that work was essential to make the men forget their plight, Trewartha kept them busy striving to dig their way out with picks and shovels salvaged from an old drift. Trewartha's authority was absolute during the long incarceration, and his skillful leadership probably saved their lives, mine officials believed.

The veteran old mine boss who grew up in the iron country showed the men how to prepare their tea; he staved off possible starvation by conservation of the scant supply of food in their lunch boxes.

Crowd Gives Cheer

Sam Snyklema, 38-year old father of eight children was the first of the miners to be brought to the surface. A mighty cheer went up from thousands of throats as he was led from the shaft lift while cameras clicked. He was taken directly to Grandview hospital.

"I was hungry, I guess, but my buddies give me some sandwiches, then old Tom wouldn't let me eat 'em like I wanted to. But that was best, because I'm all right now and I might not 'a been without some food," Snyklema said.

Snyklema's first request to a nurse was that she wash his face before he went home to his wife and children. But he did not go home. Instead, John Patrick, mayor of Ironwood, brought the miner's family to the hospital.

The discussions of religion never assumed a serious aspect, though the men did not always agree, Snyklema said.

Tried One Blast

The men exploded one blast of power, he said, and officials of the mine declared this was the blast heard Monday that could not be accounted for. The trapped miners repeatedly tapped on the pipes leading to the surface Snyklema said, but only yesterday heard from the rescuers by way of the pipes.

The task of bringing the men to the surface was slow because of the difficulty of getting the weakened men down improvised rope ladders through the debris strewn shaft from the eighth level, where most of them were found.

Although four separate rescue operations were attempted, the one which succeeded in reaching the men first, came in from the Aurora mine, about 200 feet distance from the Pabst shaft but on the same ridge.

Worked in Relays

The successful shaft was made by crews of men working in four-hour

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SAVED MINERS TELL OF HOURS IN ROCK SHAFT

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relays, timbering their tunnels as they progressed to prevent further cave-ins. For the first 100 feet the shaft was lateral. Then it turned up to a sharp angle to reach the eighth level of the G. Pabst operations where the men were entombed by a cave-in last Friday night.

Tumult Raised

A word was relayed back through the mouth of Aurora mine that the men were safe, tumult took possession of the throng of relatives who had been keeping a day and night vigil during the long rescue.

And when the word spread down the iron ridge, men and women ran from all directions to cheer. Guards had to exert force to keep overjoyed sweethearts and wives from the danger zone around the elevator. This elevator slipped and killed three men Friday night. The vibrations of that crash are believed to have caused the cave-in which trapped the miners.

Weak soup and tea and toast were hastily prepared in the kitchen of the temporary hospital set up near the shaft over the week-end and sent down for feeding to the men before they were lifted to the surface.

Fears that the men would suffer from collapse when they reached the air proved wrong. The liquid

foods given them below the surface were believed to have steadied them.

A physician and two nurses took the food below.

Harry W. Byrnes, Oscar Olson and George Hues, rescue workers, who were the first to talk to the imprisoned men and witness their plight said the resourcefulness of Trewartha undoubtedly saved their lives. The men were idle when the rescuers came upon them, though a short time before they had been digging toward the lower level in an effort to meet the rescuers.

Kept Track of Time

The men kept track of the time by recording each revolution of the hour hands on their watches on the rock walls of their compartment.

The crowd was none too patient for the rescue to be completed.

Trewartha Collapses

Tom Trewartha, whose iron will prevented panic as the men grouped

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about their underground prison, collapsed when he had safely brought his men out of the mine.

As the tall, straight mine boss came out the rescue channel the crowd sent up a cheer.

"All right boys," he said with a wave of his hand. He collapsed then into the arms of another miner and was taken to the hospital. His condition is not serious.

All of the men who escaped the "living-death" today paid tribute to Trewartha. For hours their spirits

were buoyed up by echoes of the mine whistle—which meant that rescue was close—but when the whistle grew more dim they became nervous. Trewartha forced them to work and thus forget their danger.

Another of the heroes of the underground imprisonment is Leonard Uren, former Salvation Army worker. He led his fellow workers in singing and also was one of the leaders in the religious discussions.

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