

MINERS KILLED.

TWENTY - FOUR LOSE THEIR LIVES BY SUFFOCATION.

GAS EXPLOSION AND BLACK DAMP.

Burned and Blackened Bodies Brought to the Light—Scenes of Grief Beyond Description— One Man Escapes Alive— He Will Give No Information.

Como, Col., January 11.—The little town of King, three miles from Como, is a place of mourning to-day. Yesterday noon a horrible accident occurred in the Union Pacific coal mine at this place and 24 workmen lost their lives. The dead are:

John Lolle, fire boss; Robert Blythe, fire boss; Francisco Pommerrell, Peter Ross, Chas. De Rock, Angelia Julien, Angelo Domico, Andrew Anderson, Louis Meliente, Por Nordini, Celestia Coriai, Joseph Donna, Angelo Marino, Mike Richie, Antone Antonella, Doni Francesco, Joe James, Stephen Corti, Antone Jaclibina, Charles Anterimi, Antone Pretty, Mike Mentoneld, Tom Ross, Joseph Siocca.

The sole survivor among the men in the fatal chamber was James Carmossa.

The accident occurred just before noon yesterday and was caused by what miners call "windy scott". The concussion set free and circulated the black damp and almost instant death by suffocation of the 24 men followed.

Of the 24 victims of the disaster, 21 were Italians, one Scotchman and two Americans. About eight were railroad men. In the chamber of the mine where the accident occurred there were 25 men at work, although more than 100 men were employed in the whole mine. The single survivor was thrown forward upon his face by the force of the explosion but was not seriously hurt and scrambling over the prostrate bodies of his fellows he made his way to the surface.

The noise of the explosion was heard in every part of the mine and all the men who were uninjured rushed to the open air. There was immediately the wildest excitement in the little town and a rescuing party was quickly organized. Foul gas still came from the fatal chamber, but brave men were not to be daunted by this in the work of rescuing. Into the chamber of death they hurried and with great effort brought out the 24 bodies.

The scene when the rescuing party reached the place where the accident had occurred was one of the utmost horror. Lying in all sorts of positions, with limbs and faces distorted by the agony of their death, the poor fellows were found. Some had evidently been killed instantly by the fatal blast, their bodies being so burned and blackened as to be unrecognizable.

The scenes as the mangled forms of husbands, fathers, brothers or lovers were brought out and deposited upon the frozen ground, beggared description.

Slowly, toilsomely, the rescuing party worked. It was not until after dark that the last of the 24 corpses were brought from the mine. The dead were placed in the company's store house, where the bruised and blackened faces were eagerly scanned by friends and relatives for confirmation of their death. The poison of the mine in which the accident occurred was promptly sealed up by the proper authorities to await the arrival of the state inspector in the coal mines.

The accident happened in the Union Pacific coal mine No 5, just as the miners in the sixth level knocked off work for dinner. The condition of the mine was such that no one could go down until 1:30 p. m., almost an hour after the explosion.

Carmossi was the first one brought up to the surface but no information can be derived from him. His condition is not serious, but he refuses to talk. The men worked faithfully until 7 p. m., when the last body was brought up.

The coroner is holding an inquest and no funeral arrangements will be made until his work is completed.

The damage to the mine is slight. Yesterday's terrible disaster was the first serious accident that has ever occurred at King. The mines, which are owned and operated by the Union Pacific Railway company, have been operated about six years. About a year ago a slight explosion occurred in one of the lower rooms by which one man was killed and another seriously injured.

John McNeill, state inspector of mines and L. A. Jones, his assistant, arrived here on the Denver train this evening. Mr. McNeill had but little information regarding the explosion, having simply received a brief telegram announcing the disaster.

"I cannot safely conjecture the cause of the explosion," said Mr. McNeill. "The mines are fairly safe, because of good ventilation. The supply of gas, however, is excessive and any stoppage of the fans would always be very dangerous. The mine is nearly 2,000 feet deep and a large Murphy fan of the most improved pattern is located at the top. Whenever a great quantity has accumulated, air is forced into it, the object being to dilute the gas not caught by the fan. Mr. Jones and I will make a thorough examination of the entire mine, endeavoring if possible to locate the blame. Mr. Jones inspected the mine in October and found it in good shape, with all its ventilating appliances working smoothly. He considered Superintendent Harding, who took charge last December, a competent man, and from what I have already learned, I do not think that yesterday's disaster was due to any fault of his. We will investigate every little detail and it may be two days before we can complete our report."

The mine is located about four miles from Como and is of the class known to miners as a slope mine, entrance being effected by a manway. It was opened about six years ago and is the largest of a group of several situated at that place. The average output is about 250 tons daily. Often as high as 175 men are employed there and during a scarcity of coal the mine is worked in day and night shifts. At this time the night shift is dispensed with and only about 100 men were employed in the mine.