

## SIXTEEN DIE IN COAL MINE

EXPLOSION OF FIRE DAMP AT  
BURNETT WASH.

Wives and Children Crowd About the  
Mangled Bodies of Be-  
loved Dead.

Tacoma, Wash., Dec. 8.—A special to the Ledger from Burnett, Wash., says that one of the most terrible calamities that has ever blighted the mining industry in the state of Washington occurred in the Burnett coal mine about 3 o'clock this afternoon. Without a moment's warning at least 13 lives were snuffed out and it is believed that the death list will total 16. Of these unfortunate victims 10 are men of family, while three were unmarried.

The scene in Burnett is heartrending. Frantic women, overcome with sorrow, are crying for their loved ones. Little children seek their fathers who met death while earning support for the family. On every face is depicted anguish, while the grief of those who seek but have not found their loved ones is awful to behold. Few slept tonight, as almost every house was turned into a morgue.

### Probably Fire Damp.

The cause of the explosion has not been definitely ascertained and opinions vary. By some the theory is advanced that fire damp is responsible for the disaster, but this will not be known until an investigation has been held. The Burnett mine is owned by the South Prairie Coal company. The location of the mine is 1,200 feet down a slope which is a quarter of a mile east of the depot at Burnett.

At the time of the accident there were about 40 men at work. Just prior to the fatal explosion some of the miners had ascended to the surface, and others, more fortunate than the victims, were able to make their way to safety after the terrible blast, which shook the neighborhood like an earthquake.

The Burnett mine employs 100 miners, working in two shifts. Many of the employees are Poles and Italians, and the married victims of the catastrophe leave large families. The dead:

Justus Elson, Matt Karkos, Erick Luoma, Ascar Mukari, Oscar Fiero, Andrew Matson, John Lewis, Matt Peura, John Luoma, all married; and John Valco, John Peura, Matt Erickson, all single.

Still in the mine and supposed to be dead:

James Chapman, George Barber and J. S. Taylor.

Gust Stran and Joe Forsythe were taken out alive.

State Mine Inspector Owen is on the ground assisting in the work. He says the mine was one of the best and safest in the state. Coroner Brown is on his way to Tacoma from Burnett, which is about 25 miles from this city.