

SCORES KILLED IN MODEL MINE

SEVERAL HUNDRED IN LICK
BRANCH MINE WHEN EX-
PLOSION OCCURRED.

Between Fifty and a Hundred Be-
lieved to Be Dead—Fifty Men Kill-
ed In Same Shaft On December 28
—Examined Before Men Went to
Work Tuesday Morning and Declared Safe.

Bluefield, W. Va., Jan. 12.—As the result of another explosion at the Lick Branch mine, at Switchback, about twenty miles from here, between fifty and one hundred miners were killed at 8:30 o'clock this morning. The number may be largely increased, as from 280 to 300 miners were at work at the time and it had not been ascertained, shortly before noon, how many had survived.

On December 28 last, an explosion occurred in this mine which, up to that time, had been regarded as a model mine. On that occasion the cause was not ascertained and the death list reached fifty. The last body, in connection with that explosion, was brought to the surface only last Friday, after which the state mine inspectors declared that the mine was again safe and that work could be resumed.

The majority of the miners who were engaged to resume work at the mine were Americans, with a few foreigners and some colored workers as laborers. It was stated that the mine was examined early to-day before the new shift went to work and that it was reported to be perfectly safe. In spite of this, however, soon after work was begun, the explosion occurred, with a death list that will probably far exceed that of the December explosion.

The mine is the property of the Pocohontas Consolidated Collieries company and is situated in the Tug River district, a territory that until the December explosion, had been unusually free from gas.

At 1 o'clock this afternoon a rescue party had not been able to enter the mine on account of the intense heat. It is thought that, following the explosion, the mine caught fire, although but little smoke is finding its way to the exterior.

The mine officials refuse to give an estimate of the number that may have met death, but at the pit mouth it is now believed that over 100 have perished. Fresh air is being forced into the shaft by way of the fan, which was not damaged.

While the officials cannot now suggest a cause for the explosion, miners place the blame on some of the foreign miners who may have entered with an open lamp. It was known that there was a small quantity of gas in the mine last night, and it is considered probable that this may have suddenly increased after the miners began to work and that it was ignited by an open lamp.