

COMER DIRECTIONS WILL BE ENFORCED STATES HILLHOUSE

Chief State Mine Inspector
Says Changes Ordered
Must Be Made.

GOVERNOR BACKS HIM UP

Hillhouse Would Have Stopped
Palos Mine Had He Known
Conditions.

Chief State Mine Inspector James Hillhouse Thursday made public the following letter received several days ago from the governor's office:

"Montgomery, Ala., May 24, 1910.

"James Hillhouse, Birmingham, Ala.

"Dear Sir—The governor directs me to say to you that he has read your report on the Palos mine disaster. He thinks that the inspectors should see to it that their recommendations are carried out by the operators. Whenever an operator neglects or declines to adopt the suggestions and recommendations made by the inspectors, the governor would like for you to make a report of same to him and he will see if he can have the recommendations put into full force and effect. I am,

"Very truly yours,
"JOHN D. McNEEL,
"Treasurer."

Mr. Hillhouse, when asked concerning the talk that was going on in connection with the recent explosions, said:

Statement by Hillhouse.
"Having had many inquiries personally, also by letters, and hearing of criticisms in regard to the last explosions, namely, Muigs and Palos, I deem it my duty as chief mine inspector to answer in brief as near as I can.

"A great many people are under the impression that should the inspectors make a request for any change which they think necessary and said request should not be complied with that they, as inspectors, have the authority to close the mine down. However, such is not the case. Here I wish to say for the information of those who thought so, that should I have had such power, as chief mine inspector, I would have stopped the Palos mine, I would have done it regardless of whom it displeased, had I known the conditions.

"I have, when I saw it was necessary for changes to be made in any mine, recommended same; not only that, but took pains to explain and show why such changes were necessary, and, at any time, when I thought the changes were not fully understood by the superintendent or mine foreman, I have made special trips to see if, or if not, my instructions were being carried out.

"I made it a rule when I was appointed inspector eight years ago, that I would fulfill said position to the best of my ability, showing no favor to operator or miner.

"I never held a position of trust as superintendent or mine foreman, for the last 30 years, that I did not do my duty to the man who employed me, also to the men who I employed. I am sure I have tried to do the same while I was associate mine inspector, and I will continue to do the same while I am chief mine inspector of this state. Said position I was appointed to on April 1, 1910, 20 days before the Muigs disaster and 25 before the Palos; and I may say that there is no one but those, who lost their nearest and dearest in those disasters that felt it any worse than I did, and I assure you that my predecessor, Mr. Flynn and associate, Mr. Neill, feel the same, as I know both men did their duty to the best of their ability.

Against Dynamite.
"This office for the last two years has made a fight against the using of dynamite in blasting coal and has requested the companies to use nothing but permissible explosives. I am glad to say that the majority of the companies have assisted us in our fight.

"It is also a well known fact that there is not another state in the union that has made more progress in this line with the co-operation of the operators, than we have done.

"Every mining man in this state knows the fight I have made against the dust problem. I have fought it for years, as it was a dangerous element in mining that it would cause an explosion, regardless of fire damp, and I am glad to say that I am proud of the position I took, as the majority of my critics at that time are with me now, as they see I was right.

"I am very glad to see by the newspapers that the Operators association sees the necessity of a new mining law, which will be a better protection for the lives of the miner and the property of the operators and will say that this office will be glad to assist them in framing a new law.

"Hereafter, when any of the associate mine inspectors of the chief mine inspector makes any recommendations for changes in mines, where danger is approaching or likely to cause the loss of life, after such time has been given as necessary by the said inspector that he thinks such repairs or improvements should be made, the said inspector will make a visit and see that such recommendations have been carried out."