Coal Mining Department

The Important News Of Coal Mining. New Appliances, New Methods. New Fields, Colliery Engineering

The European Markets for American Coal

Coal producers in the United States are commencing to realize that the European coal market is a field worthy of consideration. France produces less than 40,000,000 tons of coal annually, and the consumption of the country is considerably in excess of this production. Great Britain and Germany furnish most of the coal that is imported into France. It appears that up to the present time, no attempt has been made to bring American coal into France, although a study of conditions indicates clearly the possibility of American coal becoming a strong competitor.

Some months ago, a company was in process of formation in the United States, with a view of exporting coal to Spain, France and Italy. The promoters of the project contended that they could undersell English coal in those markets, provided the fleet of ships, which it was proposed to build for this purpose, could be assured of return cargoes. Investigation showed that contracts could be made in Spain, for a sufficient quantity of iron ore for return freight to the United States; it was understood that the ore could be furnished in any quantity, but nothing further was done by the American promoters. Spain consumes about 6,500,000 tons of coal annually, of which, 2,500,000 tons are imported.

Increased Use of Mining Machines

An interesting compilation dealing with the use of machines in mining bituminous coal in Pennsylvania, appears in a recent bulletin issued by the U. S. Geological Survey. The reports says:

"The number of mining machines in use in the bituminous mines of Pennsylvania increased from 5103 in 1908 to 5616 in 1909, and the machine-mined product increased from 52,447,809 short tons to 57,504,188 short tons. The machine-mined product in 1909 represented 41.68 per cent. of the total output, against 44.76 per cent. in 1908. Of the 5616 machines in use in 1909, 3847 were punchers, 1710 were chain-breast, 38 were longwall, and 21 were chain-shearing machines. In 167 mines punching machines were exclusively used and in 145 mines only chain-breast machines were used. In the mines using punchers exclusively, the number of machines was 3132 and the machine-mined product was 22,741,280 short tons, or an average 7261 tons for each machine. The exclusively chain-machine mines employed 1265 machines in the production of 24,016,842 short tons, an average of 18,986 tons to each machine. In making these comparisons, however, it should be remembered that a large number of the punching machines are used in entry and other narrow work, to which the chain machine is not adapted, and in which the tonnage won is much less than in the straight-room mining.

Member of Rescue Party Sacrifices Life

An act of great heroism occurred in the Bellevue mine, of the West Canadian Collieries company, on the night of Dec. 9, after an explosion had wrecked a large part of the underground workings. The afflicted property is located two miles east of Frank, Alberta, on the Crow's Nest branch of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Immediately after news of the disaster was spread, first-aid parties from the government station and from neighboring coal companies began to arrive at Bellevue, and rescue parties equipped with oxygen helments descended into the workings to save the imprisoned miners. The first group of rescuers to enter the danger zone was led by Fred Alderson, who personally succeeded in getting five other miners out of the poison gases, thereby saving their lives. While the party was making its way back to fresh air, Alderson saw an unknown Italian fall to the ground, and, hastily picking up the unconscious miner, removed his own helmet, placing it on the head of the helpless man. Alderson then started to run to fresh air, thinking he could stand the poisonous fumes until he could get out; however, he had not gone more than a dozen yards before he was overcome, and fell unconscious in the roadway. Some of his party saw Alderson fall, but they were in such bad shape themselves, in addition to the fact that they were dragging other unconscious men to safety, that they could not help their prostrate leader.

Help Arrives Too Late

As soon as the rescuers reached an air station, they left the men they had carried out, and rushed back to save Alderson, but found him dead before they arrived.

Alderson left a widow and four young children. The miners at Hosmer promptly initiated a movement for the benefit of the bereft family, and public subscription lists were opened in several towns in eastern British Columbia and at others in Alberta. The government of British Columbia has shown its appreciation of Alderson's heroic conduct by subscribing the sum of $500 to the fund being accumulated for the benefit of the widow and orphans.

A coroner's jury is investigating the cause of the disaster. The first witness called was James Burke, secretary of Bellevue local union of the United Mine Workers of America, who testified to having, on Dec. 3, telegraphed the Chief Inspector of Mines at Alberta asking for an inspection of the mine, the presence of gas in the workings having been reported by miners.

Explosion in Anthracite Mine

Special Correspondence

An explosion of powder or gas at the Hughestown No. 10 colliery of the Pennsylvania Coal Company at Pittstown, on Jan. 25, wrecked a section of the mine and killed or injured a number of the workmen. Six men were brought out of the colliery by rescuing parties, four of them being fatally, and the other two seriously burned. Scores of mine workers managed to escape by getting out of emergency openings as soon as the shock of the explosion was felt.

In the afternoon, on the day of the explosion, after five more injured men were brought out of the mine, the officials reported all out. Forty men who were shut in and had a narrow escape made their way out safely. Of the 11 injured six are fatally burned and five are seriously hurt.

Statistics for many States covering coal operations during the last few years, indicate a decrease in fatalities due to mine explosions, but an alarming increase in deaths due to falls of sides and roof. It appears certain, therefore, that the attention of coal-mining men must be largely directed to a better system of timbering, and the adoption and enforcement of carefully considered rules, regulating the placing of props and the withdrawal of timbers.

COAL FATAL

1911 0003

BUREAU OF MINES

SUBJECT: Mine explosion, Hughestown #10, January 25, 1911, Pittston, Pennsylvania, Six killed, Five injured and Four escaped.

A mine explosion at Hughestown #10 mine, January 25, 1911, Pittston, Pennsylvania was due to a powder or gas explosion. Six were killed, five were injured and four escaped.

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Mine Explosion.

Name of mine Hughestown #10 Date Jan. 25, 1911

Location Pittston, Pennsylvania Hour

Operator P. O.

Character of accident.	Immediate cause.
Explosion	Powder or Gas.

Number of men in mine Killed 6 Injured 5 Escaped 40 Rescued

Reference:

State Inspector's report, page ; year ending

Remarks: E. & M. J. Vol. 91, p. 254, 331®