

MANY DEAD IN OKLAHOMA MINE

Seven Bodies Brought to Surface Up to Midnight.

UNDERGROUND FIRE STILL RAGES

Rescue Party From Government Station at McAllister Battles Against Flames—Broken Machinery Retards Work.

Lehigh, Ok., Feb. 24.—Between 25 and 40 miners employed in the coal mine of the Wichita Coal and Mining company, one mile west of Lehigh, lost their lives. Fire broke out about noon in mine No. 5, entombing the men in the pits. The filling up of the shafts with smoke and failure of the machinery to work retarded the rescue.

Seven miners are known to have been killed and the fate of a score or more imprisoned in the mine is doubtful. Up to midnight seven bodies had been brought to the surface, half a dozen men had been rescued alive while the apparently lifeless bodies of several others had been found.

100 Men at Work.

The mine, which is over a mile from Lehigh, was discovered afire shortly before noon. At that time 100 men were at work in it. The greater number were near the mouth and escaped before the fire gained headway, but others in the lower workings were entombed.

The fire still is raging in the mine, and it is not believed that any of those yet within the shafts can be alive. The number of these is estimated variously by different officials of the mine at from 15 to 35.

When the fire broke out the word was spread through the mine of the disaster, and more than 100 miners either walked out or were carried out by rescuers, overcome by smoke. A large number unconscious from gas and smoke were revived after they reached fresh air.

The work of rescue is being pushed by the rescue party of the United States government rescue station at McAllister.

Negro Found Alive.

The fire was sufficiently subdued by early morning to permit rescue parties to enter. A negro was the first man found alive. In the same recess the bodies of seven dead were found. One of the number was an American; the others were foreigners.

For several hours after the fire started there was hope that the men in the mine were still safe, but later, when the government rescue party arrived and started recovering the bodies, hope died.

On the second trip of exploration, however, the rescue party brought out several inanimate bodies. Contact with the air, however, revived the men and except for weakness they were little the worse for their experience.

The disaster is the most terrible in the history of mine operating in Oklahoma. Besides the loss of lives, the damage to the mine will reach thousands of dollars. Most of the miners are white men.