

LEHIGH FIRE

COAL MINE NO. 5, NEAR LEHIGH, OKLA., IS A LIVING FURNACE.

NO ATTEMPT TO CHECK

All Efforts Now Are Being Made to Rescue the Imprisoned Men—Families Gather at Mine.

Coalgate, Okla., Feb. 22.—(Special)
—Seven bodies have been recovered from mine No. 5 of the Western Coal and Mining company at Lehigh and a rescue corps is now at work searching for the bodies of others who are known to be in the mine. It is believed that none of the twenty-five who are said to be entombed, will be taken out alive. On account of the heat and the dense smoke it is impossible for the rescuers to remain long in the mine, although all wear oxygen helmets. No attempt is being made to extinguish the fire which is at the base of the shaft.

Six of the seven men who are known to have perished are Italians. The other is a Frenchman. The wives and children of the entombed miners are gathered about the entrance to the mine frantically begging the rescue corps to enter the shaft and bring out those who are known to be within.

The exact cause of the fire is not known. It is believed that oil such as is used in the drills became ignited and that before the fifty or more miners entombed could be hoisted to safety, the conflagration worked its way through the mine cutting off all chance of escape except through the main shaft which could not be reached.

Volumes of smoke are pouring from the entrance to the main and the relief corps which is protected in a measure by the oxygen helmets which were devised for just such emergencies, is doing its utmost to bring out those who are thought to be in the mine.

Little effort is being made to extinguish the flames, the workers directing their energies toward succour.

An attempt to make a poll of the miners in the employ of the company shows that out of more than a hundred who were in the mine when the fire broke out, all but about twenty-five have been accounted for. Most of these are Italians and the scenes about the entrance to the mine is heartrending. Wives and mothers are gathered there waiting for the rescuers to bring to the surface the ones they love, whether alive or dead. Many of those who work in the mines are single men, but there is a community of interest among the miners and the interests of one are the interests of all.

Lehigh is strictly a mining town and tonight nearly every resident is to be found at the mine, where it is known that the bodies of at least fifteen miners are awaiting recovery.

At eleven o'clock it was reported that another body had been found but that the rescuers had been unable to reach it.

Later.

Word received at this office at 9 o'clock Friday morning is to the effect that 32 bodies have been taken from this ill-fated mine.