

18 BELIEVED TO HAVE PERISHED IN COAL MINE

Gas Explosion at Christopher
Entombed Them Late Last
Night

Christopher, Illinois, November 30
—Eighteen miners are believed to
have perished when a gas explosion
wrecked mine No. 11 of the Old Ben
Corporation here, at 9:40 last night.

The explosion was followed by fire.
Both air shafts and the main en-
trance were wrecked and blocked
with tons of wreckage.

It is believed the men were asphyxi-
ated, as the gas fumes were so dense
rescuers were unable to remain near
the entrances.

The detonation was so powerful that
parts of the cage at the entrance were
blown 1000 feet away.

Rescue trains arrived here shortly
after midnight from Benton, West
Franklin and Herrin, all within fifteen
miles of the scene of the explosion
and began the work of rescue.

The train carried mine rescue ap-
paratus, and work of opening up the
main shaft, which is 600 feet deep,
immediately started.

At 1:30 o'clock this morning the
rescuers had extinguished the fire and
had gotten down about 500 feet in the
shaft and before dawn it was expected
that they would reach the main tun-
nel leading back into the mine.

The rescuers were compelled to
work in shaft on account of the gas.
Many are equipped with gas helmets.

It is not known in what part of the
mine the men were working, but there
is little hope of getting any of them
out alive.

The force of the explosion was so
great that it rocked the country for
miles around and attracted hundreds
of persons to the scene.

When the news of the disaster
spread through the village, women
without wraps, carrying babies in arms,
ran frantically to the mine.

Many women, when they saw the
damage done by the explosion, fainted
and had to be carried to their homes.
Other relatives refused to leave the
scene until the rescuers had gotten
down into the shaft.

All the availing physicians and
nurses from neighboring towns were
at the mine waiting this morning to
render their services in case any of
the men there were taken out alive.

It was at first reported that 200
men were trapped, but L. S. Beam, su-
perintendent, gave out a statement in
which he said that only eighteen men
were underground when the explosion
occurred. They were caught on the
600-foot level he said.

A. T. Morey, an official of the com-
pany, said that he had little hope of
bringing out the imprisoned men alive.

No labor trouble has occurred at the
mine recently and officials and county
authorities believe that the explosion
was accidental.

Seven hundred miners are employed
by the company, but owing to the fact
that the day was a holiday only a few
men were in the shaft when the ex-
plosion occurred.