

## SILENT MEN AT WORK TO AID STRICKEN ONES

At 2 o'clock in the morning the mine officials, who were on duty at the Speculator, recognized the fact that scores of men would be trapped in the lower workings. Up to that time they had held on to the hope that the men would escape into the workings of other mines and thus reach safety. At 2:15 o'clock a telephone call was received at the Speculator from the Badger and Bell, saying that but nine men had reported safe from the Speculator workings at that time.

Immediately, Timekeeper Thomas O'Keefe, by orders from the foreman and superintendent, began notifying the coroner and hospitals. Coroner Aeneas Lane was at the mine a few minutes later and was followed by Mayor Malone, who was called from bed at 3 o'clock. When the coroner and mayor reached the mine, the men who had been raised safely, were being checked through at the office. Within a half hour the timekeepers, Grover McDonald having been called in to help O'Keefe in checking over the men, while the mine officials, safety-first men, coroner and others stood anxiously waiting.

### A Calamity.

When Timekeeper McDonald announced that 294 men still were missing, Superintendent L. D. Frink turned to the men with the statement that it looked nothing short of a calamity. District Mine Safety Engineer Harrington had arrived at the office. He at once sent out a call for mine rescue cars, one at Red Lodge and another at Colorado Springs. The mine officials sent in a request that the soldiers stationed at Mountain View camp be sent to the scene of the disaster. Coroner Lane notified all Butte undertakers to rush to the Badger and Speculator mines with all available equipment. Every physician in the city was called out for duty. Within 20 minutes five ambulances and undertakers' wagons were in the yard and a score of physicians were laying aside their top coats and getting ready for work.

When dawn broke at the Speculator mine there was presented a spectacle never equaled in history of mine disasters. From the Granite Mountain shaft, a quarter of a mile from the old Speculator shaft, the smoke poured in a torrent, deluging the valley below and spreading out over the side of the hill like a giant shroud.

### Rescuers at Work.

Between the storeroom at the Speculator and the shaft at the same place moved a silent body of helmeted men through the gray dawn, now and then bearing on their shoulders from the shaft the body of some man they had picked up in the fume-filled drifts hundreds of feet below. At the door of the air shaft a man was on guard, admitting and giving exit to the helmet men.

As the bodies were brought out of the shaft they were taken to the storeroom, where the coroner and timekeepers made identifications as fast as possible. Bodies that could not be readily identified were laid at one side in a row until friends could give their names.

Outside the storeroom, a squad of physicians and first-aid men worked on bodies that were thought possible of resuscitation. One physician worked entirely with his stethoscope, determining as fast as possible the chance of a spark of life in the bodies being brought up from below. A feature of the work in the early dawn was that hardly a word was spoken among the workers. Everything was done quickly, systematically, and in perfect order.

### Relatives on Scene.

Before the breaking light of the morning had made objects fully distinguishable for a short distance, the relatives and friends of missing men began gathering at the south gate of the Speculator. Old women without even a shawl over their heads, small children, and young wives in half costume, gathered in groups on the side of the hill above the mine and watched from a distance the safety-first workers bearing the string of bodies from the shaft. Each time a body came from the shaft and was hurried to the line of physicians, the group of women made heart-breaking suppositions as to whom it might be.

Wives who had started the morning breakfast before being notified that there was a disaster at the mine, stormed the gates in a demand for names of the dead and missing. As fast as names were called to the watchman, the timekeepers ran to the office, found whether the man was up on surface or "still below," and reported back at once. As the watchman announced the names of men who were either saved or missing still, here and there in the crowd

a woman would cry out with a delirium of joy, or break into wild ravings at the shock of hearing that a loved one still was in the smoke-laden drifts. Now and then a woman fainted and was carried to some near-by house by friends.

From one side of the hill to the other, thousands of people, drawn by the account of the accident, were beginning to gather in curious throngs. Every pile of lumber, eminence of ground and top of buildings was topped with a swarm of men. Taxi cabs and motorcars with mine officials and others interested in the work of taking the men from the mines, rolled up to the mine gates in a never-ending stream.

### Hard Work.

The two timekeepers, O'Keefe and McDonald, worked with almost super-human efficiency. With 200 men to check off—men who had been taken safely from the shaft—with scores storming the office for news to carry outside to the waiting throngs; with physicians, newspaper men, city and county officials, helmet crew men and undertakers hurrying in and out of the office, with names of dead and missing to check off and dead to identify, the two timekeepers lost neither their heads nor their tempers. Without sleep and without food until late in the morning, the two men stuck to their post and checked names with a steady and unwavering accuracy. Their coolness in the emergency and their rapid handling of the emergency calls that were sent to neighboring mines and to the city for help, were the best part of a well-organized rescue plan.

About 6 o'clock in the morning the 700-foot level had been completely cleared of men and the helmet crews, tired and almost exhausted in their battle with the fumes below ground, took 10 minutes' rest while new crews were being formed, new helmets tested out and other equipment rushed to the Badger mine, where many men were being taken out in an unconscious condition. At 6:20 they again donned their helmets and gas tanks, organized their crews and went to work clearing the 800-foot level. When they first reached the level they found the bodies of four men who had reached the station before succumbing to the fumes.

## TWO MEN LOSE LIVES TRYING TO SAVE OTHERS

Con O'Neill, foreman of the Diamond mine, and Ed Lowery, also of the Diamond, lost their lives in attempting to notify a crew of 30 men on the 1,800-foot level of the Diamond of their danger. These 30 men, however, under the leadership of their shift boss, Con Murphy, had made their way to safety through a connection leading from the Diamond to the West Gray Rock and had gone up through that shaft.

O'Neill's body was found by C. E. Calvert of the safety-first department of the Anaconda company, Crowley and a third member of the safety-first crews. They found Lowery's body also. The two were close together about 80 feet from the Diamond shaft in a crosscut running west from the south side of the shaft toward the Badger and Gray Rock. They were apparently coming back to the station when they were overcome by the gas. Calvert and those with him carried out O'Neill's body and on the way they met another crew of four men headed by Bill Kent and Charles Huber, who took out Lowery's body.

"The smoke and gas were so thick in the 1,800 of the Diamond that we could not see three feet in front of us," said Calvert. "No man could live in that gas without a helmet for 10 seconds."

The death of Ernest Sullivan, assistant foreman at the Granite Mountain, came after a most determined and heroic effort to save his life. He had been found unconscious and carried out to the Badger "dry." There three physicians with a number of volunteer workers put in two and a half hours attempting to save him. He was brought back to consciousness and they thought he was going to be all right, but he relapsed and died.

Con McLafferty, the chippy station tender, was with Mike Conroy and Peter Sheridan when they were lowered to the 2,200-foot level. He refused to take the chance of going up with them when the cage ascended again and to this fact he owed his life. He made his way out through the High Ore.