

SHORT AIR CIRCUIT CAUSE OF EXPLOSION

Federal Administrator Makes Report on Yukon Blast of December 15.

CHARLESTON, W. Va., Dec. 22.—An open door, which caused a short circuit of the air, was the cause of the explosion in mine No. 1 of the Yukon Pocahontas Coal Company, at Yukon, McDowell county, December 15, causing the death of 18 men, it was announced today by Earl Henry, chief of the state department of mines, upon his return to Charleston, following the investigation at the mine.

Mr. Henry also announced that A. M. Printice, superintendent, and I. M. Pitman, foreman of the mine, were partly responsible for the disaster and they have been tried and convicted of violating section 62 of the mine law, which prohibits any person from entering a mine before the fire boss made an examination and reported to the outside. Each of them was fined \$50.

It was found upon investigation, Chief Henry explained, that the mine had not been in operation for a few days because of car shortage, and that the foreman and his crew of 18 men had gone into the mine to relay the mine haulage with heavy steel. While they were at work a door on the main intake airway was left open the greater part of the day, short circuiting the air and allowing gas to accumulate in other parts of the mine.

About 4 o'clock in the afternoon the mine foreman went outside with the motorman for a load of rails and in his absence the explosion occurred. One of the men left in the mine went into the section where the gas had accumulated and his open lamp set fire to it, causing the concussion. He was 1,200 feet away from the others when his body was found and near his body was the open lamp.

"If the mine foreman had used good judgment," Henry said, "he could, at very little cost, have constructed a brattice, which would have prevented the air from being short-circuited, and had he remained in the mine and prevented the men from entering the un-ventilated section there would have been no explosion."