

Sprinkler In Dawson Mine Was Frozen Up

Haulways Dusty for Five Days,
Enabling Explosion to Spread,
Inspector Says.

BLAST THUS CAUSED
THE HEAVY MORTALITY

SWEEPING LEGISLATIVE PROBE PROPOSED

A sweeping investigation of the Dawson disaster, which cost the lives of 120 men in the Phelps-Dodge Corporation's No. 1 mine, Feb. 8, will be proposed in the house this afternoon, according to announcement made by Democratic Leader Howard and Rep. Edgar F. Puryear.

A joint resolution will be introduced, they said, to provide for the appointment of an investigating committee to be made up of two members of the house and two members of the senate, to be named by the house and senate; and to provide for the appointment by Governor Hinkle and attorney General Helmick of a special counsel to work with the committee and also to take steps to prosecute in case any violations of the law are brought to light.

This announcement came after Howard, Puryear and other members read over State Mine Inspector W. W. Risdon's report on the Dawson disaster.

That coal dust had been permitted to accumulate in the Phelps-Dodge corporation's No. 1 mine at Dawson; that the pipe line of the sprinkling system had been frozen for five days and there had been no water on the "roads" to lay the dust for five days prior to the explosion of Feb. 8; that while the explosion was set off accidentally, this condition allowed it to reach the innermost reaches of the mine, thousands of feet underground, snuff out the lives of 120 men and damage the mine to such an extent that no coal can be produced for months.

This, in effect, is State Mine Inspector W. W. Risdon's report on the disaster of Feb. 8, one of the most terrible in New Mexico's mining history, which he filed at Governor Hinkle's office today.

There seems to be no reason to doubt the blast was a "dust explosion," Risdon says. At least he was unable to find any indication that it was caused by gas in his investigation immediately afterward.

In regard to the accumulation of dust he says:

"It had been the practice to wet down the sides and floor of the haulage ways, but on account of the bad effect of the water on the top of the timbers and roof of the entries were not washed. This practice of not wetting down the roof permitted the dust to accumulate on top of the cross bars and in the cavities in the roof.

"I have been told by men in charge of the mine that on Saturday, Feb. 3, five days before the explosion occurred, someone closed a valve in the pipe line, thus shutting off the sprays and stopping the flow of water through the pipes. The extreme cold weather of Saturday night, Sunday and Sunday night froze the water in the pipe line and therefore, the mine had not had any water on the roads for five days preceding the explosion."

The starting point of the explosion was in the main entry, about 1,500 feet underground, according to Risdon. Here several cars in a string of 34, being hauled out at a high rate of speed by an electric locomotive, left the rails, knocked down three sets of timbers, pulled down the feed wire. One of the cars, immediately behind the locomotive, was loaded with "bug dust," or machine cuttings. At the instant of the derailment the air was filled with dust—an explosive mixture. According to his theory, the spark to ignite it was supplied when the charged feed wire dropped on one of the iron cars or rails.

Risdon then says:

"The explosion started at this point on the main entry, traveled out to the mouth and at the same time inward on the main artery to the north and south entries and on to the faces of these entries. The accumulation of fine dust on the top of the cross-bars and in the crevices in the roof, together with the accumulation of dust on the roadways (from lack of sprinkling) furnished sufficient fuel to propagate the explosion throughout the mine."

The inspector then tells how two of the 122 men in the mine at the time escaped, the sole survivors of the disaster:

"Promptness in restoring ventilation to the fourth north entry prevented the two men, who walked out of the mine 17 hours after the explosion, from being suffocated by after-damp. These men realized what had happened and knew that the air on the

(Continued on Page 3)

MERELY NEEDED BATH GIVEN TO VICTIM, ALLEGED KU KLUXERS SAY

**Indignant Vigilantes Told Five
Prisoners Put Sacks on Head
Merely for Amusement.**

LOGGERS THREW MAN IN LAKE FOR A JOKE

Washington, D. C., Feb. 24.—County officers here were concerned today with discovering whether tragedy or comedy was the motive in an alleged masked abduction Wednesday night near Midland. Meanwhile, five men were held in jail on complaint of "vigilance committee" of forty residents of Midland, who said the prisoners had kidnaped Emmett Brightman, 36, bound him, gagged him and threw him into American Lake, from which he escaped apparently none the worse.

Brightman and the indignant citizens here quoted by the police as charging that he narrowly escaped with his life. No motive was advanced by them.

The prisoners, as represented by W. E. King, one of them, said the determined that Brightman, who had been hanging around their logging camp, needed a bath, and that this rite was duly administered, without, however, subjecting the man to danger of injury.

"We masked with four sacks so he would not know us," King was quoted as saying, "and bound him and gagged him to keep him from making a fuss."

When Brightman came dripping back to Midland an "indignation meeting" was said to have resulted. According to the Sheriff's office "the committee" then was appointed to "round up the hooded band."

Sprinkler

(Continued From Page 1)

entry would be fatal. They knew that the only thing for them to do was to stay where they were and hope that ventilation would be restored in time to save their lives. They wet their clothing with the water in

their buckets and covered their faces and laid down to conserve their strength and consume as little oxygen as possible. They had the presence of mind to disconnect the battery of their lamp—not, however, to prevent an explosion, as some reporter stated, but that they might have a light to get out of the mine if they should be so fortunate as to escape suffocation. There was no hysteria with these men. They used cool judgment and they had nerve."

Risdon says the rescue work was constructed intelligently and expeditiously and now the work of cleaning up the falls and re-timbering the mine is being pushed ahead, but it will be several months before any coal can be produced.

Larrazolo for P. R. Governor

Representative Sanchez introduced a resolution in the house this afternoon to endorse O. A. Larrazolo, former governor of New Mexico, for the post of governor of Porto Rico.

BIG TIM HAS GIVEN SELF UP

Chicago, Feb. 24.—"Big Tim" Murphy, labor leader, under sentence to Leavenworth federal prison, for four years, and to pay a fine of \$20,000 for complicity in the \$350,000 Dearborn station robbery in 1921, surrendered at the federal building today.

WASHINGTON RECORDS QUAKES

Washington, Feb. 24.—Another heavy earth shock, apparently centering in the same locality as the tremendous quake that shook the Pacific on Feb. 3, was recorded early today on the seismographs of Georgetown University.

INFLUENZA

As a preventive, melt and inhale night and morning—

VICKS
VAPORUB
Over 17 Million Jars Used Yearly