

BLAME VOLPE DISASTER TO POWDER OVERCHARGE

**Report Is Made By
United States Bu-
reau of Mines Fol-
lowing Probe of
Pittston Township
Accident Which
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To Six.**

The United States bureau of mines reported in Washington today that an overcharge of blasting powder was the probable cause of a gas explosion which caused the deaths of ten men and injuries to six others in the Butler slope of the Volpe Coal Company, Pittston township, June 2.

The report added, however, "There were other possible sources of ignition of the gas in the area at the time of the explosion."

The bureau found that an accumulation of gas resulted from a disruption of ventilation due to a "squeeze" in an adjacent portion of the mines.

The bureau stated that an overcharge of pellet powder, which is a form of black blasting powder, apparently was fired from the power line by a miner, who was found dead in the gangway at the foot of the chamber in which the blasting was done. The bureau added that the pellet powder is not approved for the use to which it was put at the time of the explosion.

Can Not Understand Report.

At the offices of the United Mine Workers of America here this afternoon, it was stated that pellet powder, which is a trade name for black powder furnished by one of the powder companies, is considered a permissible explosive in the mining of coal and they can not understand, they said, the report of the United States bureau that "pellet powder is not approved for the use to which it was put at the time of the explosion." It was stated by officers of the union that black powder is used in practically all mines of the district for the blasting down of coal and that in the Butler slope, as in other mines of the region, the charge is exploded electrically, a power line being used to furnish the necessary "juice." An employee at the Butler slope also said this afternoon that pellet powder is a permissible explosive there and that all blasts are accomplished through the use of electricity.

Representatives of the United States bureau of mines were among the first on the scene following the explosion, which occurred about 10 o'clock on the morning of June 2.

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Amateur Golf Dinner At C



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They came from the Wilkes-Barre offices and brought an ambulance, rescue crew and safety equipment.

The bureau representative worked in conjunction with the state mine inspectors in the preliminary investigation of the disaster and later branched off into a separate probe.

Governor Sent Son To Scene.

Shortly after the explosion, Gov. George H. Earle sent his son, George, to the scene to make an investigation and when his report was received the governor named a special commission to investigate the cause of the explosion and to investigate safety conditions in general throughout the anthracite field. No report has ever been made by that body which comprises M. J. Hartnedy, state secretary of mines; State Senator Leo C. Mundy and Attorney General Guy K. Bard. It has been announced on several occasions that public hearings would be held but to date none has been held nor any date set for them.

Following the naming of the commission, President M. J. Kosik of the United Mine Workers sent a request to Governor Earle that a representative of the union or some other practical mine worker be added to the commission. Mr. Kosik said yesterday that his request was never answered except with a report from George Earle, Jr., that he had placed it before his father.