

CORONER BEGINS INQUEST OF MINE DISASTER TODAY

Redding and Ramsell
Give Testimony
to Jury

TO CALL OTHERS

Steinheiser in Charge
of Questioning
Witnesses

Lawrence J. Redding of Indiana, superintendent of the McIntyre mine and Charles Ramsell, mine foreman, were the first witnesses called by Dr. Edward L. Fleming, Indiana County coroner, this morning as the inquest into the deaths of the seven miners killed in the recent explosion near McIntyre got under way.

Dr. Fleming turned the questioning over to George Steinheiser of Indiana, who is chairman of the Inspectors Commission that has been investigating the June 30 disaster in conjunction with the United States Department of Mines. Among those who assisted him this morning were Dennis J. Keenan of Barnesboro and M. W. Thomas of Windber, members of the commission.

Redding, who has been superintendent at McIntyre for over four years, testified that the Kent No. 2 mine where the ill-fated explosion took place was not known as a "gas mine." Gas was, however, reported on one occasion last January or February and on June 23 before a third report early in the morning of June 30, the day of the blast.

Presence of the gas in the 3 North heading was reported to Redding on June 23, but he testified that he understood from Ramsell that arrangements had been made the next day to have it removed. Redding had, however, made no report to his superior officials because of his trust in Ramsell's ability to handle the matter.

At 6:05 on the morning of June 30, he testified, he had been informed by J. Wilmer Kinter of Homer City, the fire boss, that gas had been detected in two rooms the 7 right 3 North section. He said that the section had been fenced off and that a danger sign had been posted.

Redding instructed the dispatcher, Oscar Peters, to inform Ramsell of this fact and then went to another section of the mine because of "my confidence that Ramsell could take care of the situation." For the same reason, he said, he did not once again make any report of the gas to his superiors.

A danger sign had been placed at

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mated this levy would yield \$7,000,000.

The Treasury estimated that the new individual income sur-taxes would produce \$1,152,000,000 of the new revenue and that \$1,322,000,000 of the balance would come from corporations. The higher estate and gift taxes were counted on to yield about \$151,900,000 and new or higher excise levies on almost two-score commodities or services for the remaining \$902,400,000.

About 300,000,000 of the individual income tax revenue was estimated to result from a provision of the measure requiring that husbands and wives with separate incomes make joint returns.

In boosting the corporation taxes, the committee concentrated chiefly on excess profits, lifting the rates which now range from 25 to 50 per cent to 35 to 60 per cent and revamping the method of computing such profits.

It also voted to impose surtaxes of five per cent on the first \$25,000 of taxable income and six per cent on all over that figure.

Outstanding among the excise taxes on goods and services were a proposed \$5 annual use tax on all passenger automobiles, airplanes and yachts less than 28 feet long; \$25 annually on coin operated amusement and gambling devices such as slot and pin-ball machines; a seven per cent tax, double the present levy, on the sale of new automobiles; and 10 per cent retail sales taxes on toilet preparations, including cosmetics, jewelry and furs.

The tax on liquor was boosted \$1 a gallon.

FOOD STAMPS

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proposed, it was estimated that the shares for the three counties would be: Indiana \$20,000; Somerset, \$20,000; and Cambria, \$35,000. Only \$50,000 of the \$75,000 has been needed, however, and it is likely that the shares of the counties will be reduced proportionately.

The food stamp plan went into operation in the tri-county area March 28. It is still, however, running somewhat "below par", partly because necessary certifications for participation of WPA employees have never been received.

The reason for this delay, it is understood, is not mechanical, but rather the fact that WPA officials are awaiting establishment of the statewide food stamp plan before instituting a certifications system for their legible employees. This matter is expected to be under consideration also at tomorrow's meeting.

REVLOC

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ting coal, cutting timbers and making repairs. These men are then asked to do this work on Saturdays and Sundays. He claims that the company takes this action so as not to permit men to work a 35-hour five-day week.

L. F. Crouse, general superintendent of the company, said that there is nothing in the contract with the union which prohibits the company from requesting men to work on these days without paying time and one-half for overtime.

"These practices have been in effect all over the United States for many years. In a mine operating nearly 1200 men, it is often impractical to make repairs or move equipment other than on Saturdays and Sundays, when coal is rarely cut."

This work, according to Brown, could easily be done during the week, "but the company seeks to avoid this so as not to have to pay time and one-half for over time in Saturdays and Sundays."

A miner, it is understood, may not claim this time and one-half pay until he has worked his five days a week.

In accordance with a recent agreement, negotiations can not be held until the miners have returned to work. "This means," Crouse said today, "that the first step has to be up in the mine before anything can be done to reach a solution to the problem."

INQUEST

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the heading of the mine by the fire. McGee said, but he did not know who had removed it before the men entered on the morning of the explosion. The power to remove it, he said, lay with the mine foreman.

The answer to this question came

a short while later when Ramsell took the witness chair. The sign was removed by Elmer McGee, assistant mine foreman who was one of the seven killed by the explosion, he admitted, after the two men had made an investigation of the heading where the gas had been reported.

While he was inspecting rooms 42, 50 and 52, Ramsell went on, McGee left to make tests of the other rooms, including 42 and 44 where the blast took place. McGee reported back to Ramsell that the rooms were in safe condition and the sign was ordered to be removed. The mine foreman left that section of the mine about 9 a. m. just as the men were going in. The explosion occurred approximately 15 minutes later.

After hearing the testimony of the two men, Coroner Fleming called a short recess. Nearly 20 other witnesses, including many of the workmen who escaped from the ill-fated heading, are scheduled to be heard before the inquest is completed.

A six-men jury was called for the inquest. Its members were Charles Metcalf of Indiana, electrical mine inspector of the Clearfield Bituminous Coal Corporation, foreman; Richard Hancock of Clymer, retired mine foreman; John Steele of Clymer, an employee of the C. B. C.; S. T. McMillen, retired mine foreman; Lewis Clark of Indiana, ex-county commissioner; and James Pease, retired mine foreman.

ITALIAN

ROME, July 24.—(AP)—The Italian High Command reported today that Fascist warplanes and naval units had sunk a "large unidentified British warship," a destroyer and two munition-laden steamers in attacks on a convoy in the western Mediterranean.

The Italians also reported they had torpedoed a 10,000-ton cruiser of the Southampton class and another 8,000-ton cruiser, and said a battleship, a cruiser, a destroyer, a large steamer and another unidentified ship had been damaged by aerial bombs.

Seven British planes were shot down during the operations, a communique said, while three Italian planes were reported missing. Crews of other Fascist planes were said to have returned wounded.

The action was said to have begun at dawn yesterday when Italian scouting planes spotted the heavily-protected convoy moving in an easterly direction. Fascist torpedo-carrying planes were said to have moved at once to the attack, "defying imposing anti-aircraft reaction" and numerous fighting planes sent up from an aircraft carrier.

In a running fight that apparently lasted most of the day, one steamer of 15,000 tons and another of 10,000 tons were reported to have blown up after being struck by aerial torpedoes.

Also struck by aerial torpedoes during this phase of the engagement, the war bulletin said, were a 10,000-ton cruiser of the Southampton type, and an 8,000-ton cruiser.

"Bombed and hit," the High Command added, "were a battleship, a cruiser, a destroyer, a steamer of heavy tonnage and another unspecified unit."

After dusk Italian light naval units were reported to have joined the assault upon the convoy. Two Fascist torpedo boats were credited with sinking "a large unspecified unit" and a destroyer.

"All of our ships succeeded in getting away and returned to their bases with very slight damage," the communique said. "Rescue of survivors of the sunken enemy ships is under way."

RUSSIANS

MOSCOW, July 24. (AP)—German bombers, attacking in relays for five and one-half hours, subjected this city to its third successive nocturnal bombardment during the night, but today the Russians brand the raid—like its predecessors—a failure.

No change in the fighting front was indicated by the Russians, an afternoon communique saying stubborn engagements continued during the night in the directions of Porkhov, Polotsk-Nevil, Smolensk and Zhitomir. The Red air force was credited with bombing German motor units and airfields.

Though approximately 150 planes were estimated to have taken part in the assault on the capital, authorized sources said only a few had penetrated the curtain of steel hung up by anti-aircraft defenses and declared no military objectives had been hit.

Some casualties were known.