

31 Men Blown To Bits In Quarry Explosion



General air view of limestone quarry of the Lehigh Portland Cement Company, four miles north of Easton, Pa., after a premature explosion of hundreds of pounds of dynamite had killed 31 persons. White cars in left foreground are Pennsylvania State Motor Police cars; to the right are sheeted bodies and a group of rescuers alongside. The blast was felt as far away as 50 miles, and shattered windows in a school-house half a mile from the scene, slightly injuring 14 school children.

3 CANDIDATES ANNOUNCED BY CHAIRMAN FRITZ

D. J. C. O'Donnell For Congress, Marshall M. Cohen And J. W. Gardner For Legislature

Members of the Executive committee of the Democratic organization of Lancaster county met Thursday with County Chairman Albert H. Fritz and announced that the complete ticket for the primary election will be announced Monday.

Chairman Fritz did, however, announce that Marshall M. Cohen will run for re-election from the city for the post of representative to the General Assembly. Daniel J. C. O'Donnell, Phoenixville, will be the candidate for Congress from the Lancaster-Chester district. He is an attorney-at-law, and resides at Phoenixville, Fritz reported.

James William Gardner, of near Texas, Fulton Twp., has been selected as one of the three candidates for State Legislature from the county district, Fritz announced. Gardner is a retired bank cashier, moving to Fulton Township with his family of three sons and two

More of CANDIDATES on Page 24

CITY SCHOOLS BEGIN EASTER RECESS TODAY

Manheim Township, Lancaster Township and F. & M. College To Close Good Friday

Easter vacation will begin Friday (today) for the nearly 9,000 pupils in the city schools, and will continue until Monday April 6.

The vacation is the longest of the 1941-42 school term, since the Christmas vacation was cut short to make up time lost by postponement of school in the Fall, due to the infantile paralysis epidemic.

For the same reason, many of the other schools will have unusually short vacations. The Manheim Township schools will be closed on Good Friday. The Lancaster

Cause Of Earth-Shaking Blast At Easton A Mystery

20 Tons Of Dynamite Fired Prematurely As Workers Eat Lunch; Concussion Felt 50 Miles Away; Windows Shattered In Bethlehem

Easton, Pa.—(AP)—Thirty-one men were literally blown to bits Thursday by an earth-shaking, premature explosion of 20 tons of dynamite in the limestone quarry of the Lehigh Portland Cement Company on the banks of the Delaware river five miles north of Easton.

DRAFT BOARDS GET MASTER LISTS OF THIRD DRAFT CALL

Clerks Begin Painstaking Task Of Determining Order Of Registrants

Master lists of the numbers, drawn in the third national lottery March 17, arrived in local draft board offices Thursday and clerks began immediately the painstaking job of determining the order in which registrants would be called for Army service.

The master lists, compiled by National Selective Service headquarters at Washington, were speeded to such an extent that the ink was still moist on the pages. The task of assigning order numbers to the 13,137 men, who registered on February 15, will take at least several days, draft board clerks said.

NEW CALLS RECEIVED

Meanwhile several boards received staggering calls for men for induction. While clerks, in conformity with Army regulations declined to reveal quotas, it was learned that one board will send as many men as all eight boards did in some calls before the United States entered the war.

County Board No. 1, with headquarters at Mount Joy, announced that the following men were list-

So terrific was the concussion that it was felt 50 miles away. Hardly a house or building for miles around escaped damage. Many persons were injured, including a dozen children cut by broken glass in a grade school half a mile from the scene.

"The whole world just seemed to shake," one worker said.

LOCAL MAN MISSES TRAIN—AND EXPLOSION

Robert L. Davis, 305 E. Orange St., missed a train Thursday morning—and saved his life.

Davis, a Hercules Powder Company salesman, missed an early train which was to have taken him to Easton to participate in blasting operations at the limestone quarry of the Lehigh Portland Cement Company.

He arrived on the next train—35 minutes after the premature dynamite explosion and found that three Hercules colleagues, close friends, were among those killed.

Thursday night investigators continued to search the area, fearful the death toll would rise still higher.

WORKERS EATING LUNCH

The explosive had been assembled on the rim of the pit in preparation for blasting away an entire side. During a lull in operations some of the workers opened their lunch boxes for a mid-morning

More of EXPLOSION on Page 16

CIO, AFL LEADERS DENOUNCE SLOWING DOWN IN WAR WORK

WLB Agent Recommends Four CIO Stewards In Cleveland Plants Be Discharged

Washington — (AP)—Slow-downs were denounced by the leadership of both the CIO and AFL Thursday and the machinery of the War Labor Board swung into action to eliminate that form of obstacle to production.

With the approval of a CIO union, William E. Baldwin, a special investigator for the Labor Board, recommended that four CIO Stewards employed by the Cleveland plant of the Aluminum Company of America be discharged for instigating a slow-down in the plant.

DEMAND LABOR LAWS

Meanwhile, on Capitol Hill, demands continued to be heard for new labor legislation. Senator Pepper, Dem., Fla., urged the abolition for the duration of the war, of all legal restrictions on the hours of labor. In a Senate speech he urged the establishment of a tribunal empowered to fix working hours, wages, salaries, profits, prices and bonuses.

Under his plan, Congress also would outlaw the payment of initiation fees to any organization as

More of LABOR on Page 16

Bulletin

QUEZON AND FAMILY SAFE IN AUSTRALIA

San Francisco — (AP)—The Melbourne radio was heard here Thursday night announcing that Manuel Quezon, president of the Philippine Commonwealth, his war staff and family, were safe in Australia with General Douglas MacArthur.

SIXTEEN
LANCASTER

EXPLOSION

(Continued From Page One)

ing snack in the spring sunshine. Then suddenly the blast let go.

Parts of some bodies were hurled 200 yards. Windows were shattered in homes in Bethlehem and Allentown, 18 and 16 miles away respectively. Doors in Allentown homes were jarred open and windows twisted askew. A barn collapsed on a farm a half mile from the quarry. Sleepers were tossed from beds in nearby homes.

However, sixteen workers in the bottom of the pit, 120 feet below the rim, escaped injury.

FBI TO MAKE PROBE

James A. Gish, plant superintendent, said there was no way to determine the cause of the explosion, but that he was confident there was no sabotage. Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation arrived from Philadelphia, however, and the State Department of Labor and Industry began an immediate investigation.

After a preliminary investiga-

tion, Thomas J. Quigley, chief of Pennsylvania's Bureau of Mines and Quarries, asserted the "disaster still is an absolute mystery as far as cause is concerned."

He said he considered it unlikely a bullet had been fired at the dynamite or a time fuse hidden in a shipment. He added, however, he would not discount the possibility of sabotage.

"If I did," he explained. "Three thousand people would think I was a fool. However, saboteurs would have no way of knowing exactly the best moment for the dynamite to explode."

PLACED IN 34 PILES

At the time of the explosion Quigley said the "dynamite was heaped in 34 piles ready to be placed in 120-ft. deep holes spaced every 12 feet at the top of the embankment 10 feet back from the edge.

A large part of the company's operations are being devoted to war production.

Gish said it was quite possible that something dropped on the explosive from an airplane which he was informed flew over the quarry just before the blast. Coroner David F. Bachman theorized the dynamite might have been touched off as it was being placed in holes by the workmen.

"Bodies were scattered around for an eighth of a mile," said William Miller, 38, fire chief from nearby Nazareth and one of the first officials to reach the scene.

"I saw a leg here or an arm there. They were terribly mangled. I found several children were hit by flying glass but none of them was injured seriously."

Seventy children in the Lehigh Consolidated school half a mile away were just beginning classes when the explosion occurred. All windows in the two-room building were broken. Although a dozen pupils and both teachers were in-

jured, only two children were detained at a hospital.

POWDER CO. EXPERTS KILLED

Two explosive experts and a salesman, all employees of the Hercules Powder Company, were among the dead. George B. Haddesty, Jr., of Allentown, a veteran of 25 years' experience, was killed as he sat in a car near the quarry. The others were Ernest Ray Garnett, 41, of Wilmington, Del., blasting superintendent, and William Lanahan, 33, of Bronxville, N. Y., the salesman.

Approximately 300 volunteer first aid workers were at the scene within half an hour. Soldiers and State Police were mobilized for guard duty. Ambulances, nurses and physicians were rushed from nearby towns.

Weeping wives and relatives were held half a mile away while rescuers went about the grim task of picking up the mangled bodies. Pending removal these were placed in rows at the bottom of the quarry and covered with white cloth sacks in which cement is packed.

Less than a dozen had been identified more than nine hours after the tragedy. Only the arm of Foreman Charles Smith was found. A ring on a finger established his identity. Parts of bodies that couldn't be identified were piled in a heap and also covered with sacks.

John Patti, assistant foreman of the quarry crew, escaped death by a matter of 20 steps. He had walked away from the danger area a few seconds before the blast.

GRADE SCHOOL SHAKEN

Describing the destruction in the grade school building, Mrs. T. Frank Leh of Nazareth, one of the teachers, said it was miraculous that children facing the windows escaped death.

"The whole building shook," said 11-year-old Lenoore Hagley. "It seemed that all the windows fell at once. We all covered our eyes so the glass wouldn't blind us. We didn't know what had happened."

At the teachers' direction, the children marched calmly from the building. The injured received first aid in the school yard.

One of the persons thrown from their beds was Mary Koch, proprietress of the Sandt's Eddy Hotel, a quarter of a mile from the scene.

"I've read about people being thrown from their bed but I never knew it could really happen," she declared. "When this one let go it lifted me out of the bed, covers and all, and dumped me on the floor."

"Window glass was flying all over the place and little stones and big stones began raining down on the roof."

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LIST OF KNOWN DEAD

Easton—(P)—The known dead in the dynamite explosion at a limestone quarry of the Lehigh Portland Cement Company include:

William L. Lanahan, New York City, salesman for Hercules Powder Company; Elwood Eberly, Bath, Pa.; Clayton C. H. Herman, Nazareth, Pa.; Leo Pace, Martin's Creek, Pa.; Karol Gumlok, Phillipsburg, N. J.; Charles Smith, Stockertown, Pa.; John Kopach, Nazareth, Pa.; Stephen Talpos, Nazareth, Pa.; Samuel E. Smith, Sandt's Eddy, Pa.

Franklin J. Krock, Sandt's Eddy, Pa.; Leon A. Melchner, Martin's Creek, Pa.; Alfred Lee Frankenfield, Mud Run, Pa.; August Marinelli, Martin's Creek, Pa.; Otto Melchner, Martin's Creek, Pa.; Joseph Ascani, Bangor, Pa.; Quinto Pignotti, Martin's Creek, Pa.

Arthur Zappasodi, Martin's Creek, Pa.; Raymond Pulgini, Martin's Creek, Pa.; Charles Lilly, Nazareth, Pa.; Lester Gruver, Easton, Pa.; John Sikora, Easton, Pa.; Andrew Kerlick, Nazareth, Pa.; Michael Kochis, Oxford, N. J.; William List, near Wind Gap, Pa.

Benny Ascani, Martin's Creek, Pa.; Victor Grbish, Oxford, N. J.; John Pulcini, Martin's Creek, Pa., truck driver; George B. Hadesty, Allentown, Pa., powder expert of the Hercules Powder Company; Albert Bavaria, Martin's Creek, laborer; Ray E. Garnett, of Wilmington, Del., explosive expert of the Hercules Powder Company.

A company spokesman said Ettore Plebani, a laborer, was missing.