



EXPLOSION KILLS 37 MINERS—The big hole torn in the side of the elevator is mute evidence of the terrific force of an underground explosion in which 37 miners were killed in the Pocahontas Fuel Co. coal mine at Bishop, Va. The damaged elevator was jammed at the top, forcing rescue operations to be carried on through a second entrance about two miles away in West Virginia. The explosion, probably from gas, roared through a level of the mine about five miles from the entrance. (AP Wirephoto).

Blast Fatal To 37 Miners Being Probed

Gas Explosion 'Like A Big Puff Of Wind'

BISHOP, Va. (AP) — Mining experts planned a descent into the depths of the Bishop coal mine today in an effort to fix the cause of a gas explosion that brought death to 37 miners.

Federal and state officials were joined by top officers of the Pocahontas Fuel Co., operators of the mine, in the formal investigation.

The 37 miners were entombed early yesterday in the big mine by the explosion, described by a survivor as "like a big puff of wind."

ODDLY MUFFLED

The oddly muffled blast occurred at 1:55 a.m., less than two hours after 180 miners had gone to work on the midnight shift at the big mine straddling the Virginia-West Virginia border.

Sixteen hours later, the last bur-lap-shrouded body was brought to the surface by rescue teams composed in part of miners who had fought their way to safety through choking dust and fumes.

Not since Dec. 21, 1951, when 119 perished in a blast at West Frankfort, Ill., had there been a mine disaster of such magnitude.

Early today, there were only theories as to what caused the explosion, which in one terrible instant consumed the oxygen in the air at the 320-foot depth and caused slate slides that buried some of the victims.

SURPRISINGLY MILD

So mild did the explosion seem to miners only a short distance from the death tunnel in which 37 were trapped that at first there was little thought of a major tragedy.

As early as 9:30 a.m., the anxious crowds that waited tensely near the mine entrances had been told by the Pocahontas Fuel Co., that "there are no survivors."

Home Exemption Repeal Proposed

State-Equalized Assessments Also Asked In Bureau Report

By DON MEIKLEJOHN
Democrat Staff Writer

Repeal of the \$5,000 homestead tax exemption and a program of state-equalized county assessments was recommended in a report today to the Florida Citizen's Tax Council.

The report was prepared by Ernest E. Means of the Bureau of Governmental Research and Service of