

Rescuers Push Forward, Tired But Refuse To Quit

LOGAN, W. Va. (UPI)— Dog-tired rescuers who refuse to quit, pushed forward slowly today in their determined attempt to reach 18 fellow miners sealed in a fire-seared mine tunnel near here for more than six days.

As the ordeal neared a second week, it was learned that in the Vatican Pope John XIII has been praying daily for the trapped men.

Ray Carnay, national news director for Balaban radio stations at Dallas, Tex., placed a telephone call to the Vatican and was told by a spokesman:

"Please tell the American people that the Holy Father has been praying for the unfortunate victims of the mine disaster in West Virginia ever since he received news of it, and continues to pray for them."

Within 150 Feet
The latest word at the pithead

es Nikita one Trip

MOSCOW (UPI) — Premier Nikita Khrushchev's illness which forced sudden postponement of his visit to France created scarcely a ripple of excitement today in Russia. Details of the flu attack were kept secret.

A Tass news agency announcement today said Khrushchev would visit France from March 23 until April 3, an indication he was recovering. It made no mention of his illness.

In other countries a premier's illness would be regarded as the biggest news of the hour but Khrushchev drew only one paragraph on the front page of the Communist Party newspaper Pravda. Even this was unusual.

There was no indication whether Khrushchev, who will be 66 next month, was under medical care at his Moscow home, at some sunny resort town on the Black Sea, in a clinic or at his country home. No medical bulletins were connected. President El-

of the mine eight miles southwest of here was that advanced parties were working somewhere within 150 feet of an area where the entombed men may have barricaded themselves against heavy smoke and intense heat.

The immediate problem was to get an air supply in front of the rescue parties as they inched along the stifling passageway far underground.

They were adding pipe as they went to an improved ventilating system.

The miners have not been heard from since 8:30 a.m. e.s.t. Tuesday when a slate fall ripped down electric cables and started a fire in the Holden No. 22 mine in southwestern West Virginia.

"I have no doubt that within 24 hours we will know what, if anything, is in that first area," said Raymond Salvati, president of the Island Creek Coal Co., early today.

Rescuers Battle Smoke

Until today, rescue workers had attempted to pierce through using only the main corridor. They began using the three approaches feeling they had a better chance to converge on the areas. The second area lies some 1,200 feet beyond the closer section.

Smoke has been one of the major obstacles crews have had to contend with. Fires that broke out some 485 feet beneath the ground surface and about two miles from the pithead belched forth clouds of choking smoke and carbon monoxide gas.

Fresh Air Bases

The lack of fresh air forced rescuers to retreat countless times and "fresh air bases" have been advanced by sealing off side passageways.

Hopes as to whether the imprisoned men would be alive rose and fell with every obstacle that loomed before the rescuers. Time was the most important element to be considered.

Officials had estimated that the men may have had an air supply of about 207 hours if they barricaded themselves properly. The 144-hour mark was reached at 8:30 a.m. today.

Air Still

Salvati said there was a possi-

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Teen Town To Present 3-Act Comedy Tuesday

U.S. MOVES LARGE FORCE TO CARIBBEAN

WASHINGTON (UPI) — The United States moved a large military force into the Caribbean area today in a training exercise.

The Air Force and the Army joined forces in "Operation Big Slam-Puerto Pine" — hauling 18,000 troops from throughout the United States to Puerto Rico.

The Defense Department said the exercise was to test the mobility of the Strategic Army Corps the combat force maintained "at the ready" for sudden need.

It also was a test of the ability of the Military Air Transport Service (MATS) to airlift troops and equipment on a large scale to an overseas area.

Meanwhile, operation "Banyan Tree II" was still underway in Panama. In that exercise United States forces were joined by troops from Peru, Brazil, Columbia, Chile and Panama.

The Navy was participating in both exercises and said it had other training maneuvers scheduled in the troubled Caribbean in the next few months.

The department maintained that all of this activity was routine, and was planned months before the strained relations between the United States and Cuba developed.

TRAFFIC TOLL

Teen Town will present a three-act comedy "It's Great to be Crazy," at 8 p.m. Tuesday in the Hinton High School auditorium.

The characters in order of appearance are: Betty Lou Maxwell who is 15, cute, peppy, and aspires to be a great dramatic writer. She is portrayed by Rachel Bussard. . . . Bernadine, played by Lucinda Ayres, is Betty Lou's best friend and is also 15. She is perfectly contented to be the workhorse of the pair, as she looks upon all her companion's actions with admiration. . . . Connie Maxwell acted by Kathy Moore, is 17, pretty, personable, and a freshman in college. She thinks Grover Jennings is someone special. . . . Wilber Maxwell is 13 and the "ambitious" type. He has his nose in and out of one thing after another. Wilber is portrayed by Joe Mazella. . . . Janet Maxwell, played by Barbara Richardson, is the mother of Betty Lou, Connie, and Wilber. She is about 40, pleasant, and attractive. . . . Hercules Nelson, acted by Jim Brown, is Wilber's boom pal. He is about the same age and size as his pal, but always looks as though he's been through the washing machine. . . . Aunt Mary is Mrs. Maxwell's aunt of about 60. Marsha Nye plays this energetic, little old lady who always has something to say. . . . John Maxwell, played by Shannon Wyant, is the father who thinks he's going crazy, because he imagines things are moving with no one to move them. . . . Mrs. J. Jasper Jennings, portrayed by Sally Wilson, is ever aware of her position atop the social ladder. She is a friend of Janet Maxwell's and Graver's mother. . . . J. C. Mallory is Mr. Maxwell's boss who is the garrulous, back-slapping, strutting character who hands out cigars at the least provocation. J. C. is played by Ike McNeer. . . . Grover Jen-

Rescuers . . .

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bility the entombed miners had taken double precaution to prevent smoke and gas fumes from reaching in mass quantity the area in which they barricaded themselves.

He said the air at a point about 300 feet in front of the area giving rise to the feeling some type of barricade might have been set up to prevent the deadly air from rushing to the area they picked to await help.

Rescue team members said the going was "tough" as they moved into the area.

"The smoke is so dense you can poke your finger in it, pull it out and leave a hole," said Paul Lane, a rescue team leader. Lane also is an employe of the safety department for another Island Creek mine.

He also provided some idea of the intense heat workers had to contend with. "It was the best turkish bath I ever had," he said.

These statements were made during the news conference called early this morning after rescue teams had decided to use the three avenues of approach in an attempt to reach the trapped men.

Company officials participating remained confident the men would be found alive. Salvati expressed such optimism.

"We are confident the men took the proper precautions in preparing to wait for rescue teams," he said. "I believe we will find the men alive."