

13 Bodies Found in Mine, Hope Is Gone for 5 Others

**Searcher Says Group Apparently Asphyxiated
Within Few Hours After Being Trapped
Inside West Virginia Pit Last Week**

LOGAN, W. Va., March 16 (AP).—Until they found the first body, searchers held some hope that the 18 men trapped in Holden Coal Mine 22 might still be alive.

By early today 13 bodies had been hauled out of the gas-filled passageways and the last wisp of hope for the others was gone, but the search went on.

Somewhere in the dank honeycomb of tunnels were the other members of the digging party imprisoned March 8 by a cave-in and fire nearly three miles from the mine opening.

Two in the original group of 20 scrambled to safety moments after discovery of the fire, apparently touched off when falling slate snapped an electric trolley wire.

Jack Matheson of nearby Holden, in the rescue team which found the first 13 bodies, said death by asphyxiation came early for the men in the Island Creek Coal Company mine eight miles from the Kentucky border.

Death might have been caused by smoke from the fire or by poison coal-gas permeating the abandoned mine section to which the victims had fled.

Passing up three carved-out rooms in which they might have sealed themselves off from the deadly fumes until help came, they had dashed for an opening in the abandoned section, but there was no opening. It had been barred within recent weeks by crumbling walls.

"There's no doubt," said Matheson, 34, former section boss of the digging, "that they've been dead since a few hours after the fire."

He and nearly 200 others labored and groped in the rubble-strewn tunnels in the hope that the men had chosen to wait it out in one of the three refuge areas.

The rescuers had battled

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Plan Bolsters Voting Rights

**Provides for Negroes To
Cast Ballots Even If
They Are Challenged**

WASHINGTON, March 16 (AP).—House civil rights quarterbacks drafted today what they called a strengthened version of the Administration's voting referee plan.

It would, they said, provide for Negroes or other minority citizens to cast their ballots even though their right to vote was under challenge. The ballots would be impounded, and passed on later.

Rep. Emanuel Celler of New York, Democratic floor leader for the civil rights forces, said the proposal had been accepted by Republican members, Administration spokesmen and Democrats who yesterday pushed a broad new voting rights plan.

Today's new idea was an effort to get all civil rights backers behind one plan.

A House decision on the issue was in prospect before nightfall.

In other developments in the general civil rights battle:

1. President Eisenhower reaffirmed at a news conference

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Miners

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around the clock against fire, smoke, knee-deep water, and a makeshift ventilating system.

The first body was found sprawled alone. Twelve others were in two nearby heaps.

Wrapped in blankets and plastic bags, the first bodies were carried to the base of the 485-foot elevator shaft and reached the surface at 4:47 a. m.

Snow had started an hour earlier and had blanketed the grimy mine buildings and ground. A crowd of about 50, none of them relatives, watched the bodies arrive at the surface more than 189 hours after the men reported to work last Tuesday morning. They were taken to Logan for identification.

A line of about six ministers read the 23rd Psalm in unison as the bodies arrived.

One rescue worker said it took a six-man team about 105 minutes to bring one body from the depths of the mine to the elevator. They had to bypass the smouldering fire area and crawl through tiny passageways.

One miner said a note was found in one man's hand. He said it told his wife he loved her more than she thought and asked her to raise her children in a Christian life.

Hundreds began flocking last night to this little valley mining community of neat hillside bungalows. They got as far as a state police barricade four miles up the road.