

Few Accidents

Safety The Byword At Robena Mine

By JOHN PLACE

Since the Robena Mine opened in 1937—as the world's largest in potential production—safety has come first.

J. L. Sullivan, then general superintendent, said:

"The safety of the lives of our employes is our first and most important business."

There have been few accidents since then in the sprawling underground workings.

The most serious occurred only two months ago.

Gas Blast Killed 2

A gas explosion Oct. 3 at the Robena No. 2 Mine took the lives of two miners and injured two others. It was the first fatal accident in the history of the mine.

Disaster teams and safety personnel have consistently walked off with first prize at competitions held by the U. S. Bureau of Mines.

The mine system, which spreads beneath 69,000 acres, was named for Mrs. Robena Moses, mother of Harry Moses, president of the H. C. Frick Co.

Frick operated the mine for the Carnegie-Illinois Steel Co., later to become the U. S. Steel Corp.

It began producing in 1937 with two parallel tunnels but did not become a full-fledged operation until 1946.

In the overall design, engineers laid out the mine something like a town, with networks of main highways, side streets, cross streets and back alleys.

Time-tested measures and principles were employed, not only to overcome hazards common to all industry, but to cope with special hazards in mining coal.

Great pains were taken with the ventilating system. Emergency doors, chemical fire extinguishers and telephones were installed.

The passageways themselves resemble a subway tunnel.

An official from Pakistan, shown through the Robena Mine in 1949, exclaimed, "This is cleaner than the New York City subways."