

MINE SEALING WORK STARTED

**Attempt Will Be Made Later
To Remove 20 Bodies
Still Believed In Pit**

PINEVILLE, Ky., Jan. 2 (UP)—Work was to begin today on the sealing of the Kentucky Straight Creek Coal Co. mine at Four Mile near here where fires have been raging since an explosion Dec. 26 took the lives of 24 miners.

Harry Thomas, Chief of the State Department of Mines and Minerals, said at Lexington that representatives of the Bureau of Mines and his department entered the mine yesterday with Earl Lewis, mine operator, to complete preparations for the sealing.

A pipe was to be inserted in the concrete sealing mixture, Thomas said, so daily air samples could be taken to determine when the oxygen in the mine had become too low to support combustion.

After the tests showed the fires to be out, Thomas said, a cooling-off period of at least 20 days would be required before the mine could be entered again. After the waiting another attempt will be made to bring out the 20 bodies believed still in the mine, he said.

Meanwhile, a report made public at the request of Attorney General Eldon E. Dummitt and dated Jan. 28, 1945, stated that at the
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Four Mile mine "nothing is being done toward safety, and mine law is being absolutely neglected in every respect."

The detailed report on the safety conditions in the mine was prepared by Refus J. Bailey, a District Mine inspector for the state, following an inspection of the workings. It listed recommendations including the removal of coal dust and rock dust from the workings and mentioned the presence of the deadly Methane gas in the 1-left and 6-left.

Thomas said he handed the report to Dummit when that official called personally at his office in Lexington. The department head pointed out that the report was of conditions as they existed in the mine almost a year ago.

Thomas, who became department head last November, said that to his knowledge no request had been made on the part of the State that the mine be closed until conditions were improved. Miss Lena Wiedmer, Department Secretary, who said she had been handling the department records for the past 11 years, corroborated Thomas' statement.