

# SIMPLE STORY OF HAZARD IS TOLD BY MINER

Cavein in Utah-Apex Mine Is Initiated by Fall  
of Ton of Rock; Retolaza Crawls 12 Feet  
in Hour; Takes Two Hours to Release  
Norden, Who Has Broken Leg

*By Gordon Wirick*

**B**INGHAM, Oct. 19.—Although he slept the greater part of the fifty-six hours of his entombment in the Utah-Apex mine, Jose Retolaza, hero of Tuesday's disaster, excited almost to hysteria by his midnight recital of the horrors which killed or injured every other member of his party, threw off the effects of powerful opiates and refused to sleep this morning.

He is in a hospital here, where he was taken following his statement of the disaster to mine officials in the company office.

His English softened by the accent of his native tongue, Retolaza told a simple tale, composed of actual statements, the bald simplicity of which accentuated the heroism of this quiet man.

"We were working together on the fourth set," he explained. These sets have a height of about six feet each, which would have placed the party about eighteen feet above the tunnel level.

"We were reinforcing the timbering when a rock weighing maybe a ton fell from above and knocked a post out. Charlie Parsons" (the name by which Albert Parker was known in the mines) "told Mr. Eden it looked dangerous.

"We continued working for perhaps a minute, when Mr. Norden told us to get out.

#### FALLING TIMBERS.

"They started down the ladder, and just before the cavein I noticed that Armstrong was ahead, then Nelson, Mr. Norden, and Parsons. I was still on the set and protected by its timbers. One of the falling timbers struck Parsons on the head and, I am certain, killed him instantly.

"I didn't see any more for a long time. Below and above me, the stope was filled with timbers, rock and earth. Only that little place on the fourth set was safe.

"Then, away down below, I could see the flicker of a miner's lamp. I started to creep down to it. I crawled through breaks in the pile of wood and rock. It took me about one hour to crawl about twelve feet.

"Once in a while I would get started through a hole and the stuff above would settle and force me back to find another break. One time a rock fell and hit my head, knocking off my lamp. Then I hollered at the light below.

#### DIGS NORDEN OUT.

"Mr. Norden answered and told me he thought his leg was broken. A big rock was on top of it and dirt was piled around it. It took me about two hours to dig him out. He was all in, but felt better after a little while.

"Water dripping from the mine walls made a mud puddle where he was lying. We were on the second set and had a clear space maybe five feet square and six feet high. It was bad to get wet, so we found a little place that was pretty dry and crowded in there together.

"Mr. Norden had half a can of tobacco and I had a package of cigarets. We smoked these up the first day. I told him we had to sleep. I had been in such a place before and knew my companions would try to dig me out. We had nothing to eat and very little to smoke and it was best that we sleep as much as possible.

#### SLEEPS MOST OF TIME.

"I slept most of the time, but Mr. Norden didn't seem able to sleep. Finally he did, he couldn't help it, but every little noise when the pile of rock would settle down the stope he would wake up. Finally we heard the rescue party digging in to us. Mr. Norden wouldn't sleep after that, but I slept as much as I could.

"Then Mr. Bonnett got close enough to talk to Mr. Norden and later they brought us some soup and some more cigarets. They passed these to us through a break in the pile. After eating we felt better. Then they handed us a saw and we worked from our side to make the hole big enough to crawl through.

"We were lucky to be able to walk out of there."

#### HARROWING EXPERIENCE RELATED BY NORDEN.

Joseph Norden, superintendent of the mine, also related the incidents leading up to their again walking in daylight. He said that Retolaza reached him at 8 p. m. Tuesday and extricated him from a painful position. At that time Norden had a big boulder resting on his abdomen and legs, and, despite putting forth every effort, he was

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# TWO RESCUED

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that two men besides Norden were on the shelf.

## RETOLAZA THE HERO.

Retolaza, according to the tale told by Norden, saved the superintendent's life. Last year, hemmed in the faulting of a coal slip at a mine in Sunnyside, Retolaza spent two days alone while workers dug through his living tomb. When the crash came in the local mine Tuesday, Norden and Retolaza were saved from extinction by the protection of a bulkhead.

Retolaza, seven feet above Norden on the manway, made out that the superintendent was pinned by one leg under the fallen rocks and timber. For four hours the Mexican laborer toiled frantically, unceasingly, penetrated the intervening barrier and gave what aid he could to his helpless companion. Hungry, thirsty, exhausted, he carried on until Norden was released, and to this effort Norden declares he owes his life.

## TWO OTHERS MAY LIVE.

Bare possibility that Richard Armstrong and Albert Parker, the missing pair of the party, are also alive in a pocket similar to that which sheltered Norden and Retolaza was voiced by the superintendent when he emerged from the mine. He bases this hope upon the fact that they had preceded him down the ladder and the belief that an obstruction similar to that which saved himself and Retolaza may have intervened to keep them from death.

On this assumption, and hoping desperately it proves true, the rescue party early this morning redoubled efforts to clear the mine tunnel at the sight of the disaster