

**EXPLOSION AT EAST BROOKSIDE COLLIERY**

On Saturday, August 2, a disastrous explosion occurred at East Brookside Colliery, by which twenty lives were lost.

When I reached the scene of the accident I was informed that two explosions had taken place. The inside superintendent, mine foreman and a number of assistant foremen and fire bosses were reported to be inside. On going down to the fifth lift of the tender slope and walking west, we found several dead bodies at the mouth of the tunnel that was being driven south to the shaft. Outside Superintendent Lee was in charge of the work of removing the bodies to the surface. With Charles Fegley, a miner, I started to look for the superintendent and foreman. After traveling west in the No. 4 seam to No. 2 tunnel, we turned in to the No. 5 seam and walked east to breast No. 60, where we found Mr. Lorenz, his clothes torn to shreds, but still conscious. We carried him back to a turnout at breast No. 45 and sent for help and he was carried to the surface. We then went inside to find the foreman. The air being foul at No. 63 chute, two men equipped with Draeger helmets went in and found the foreman lying dead at chute No. 65. He was placed on a stretcher and removed to the surface. We then returned to the tunnel near the slope, and as the air compressor was going at full speed we were enabled to go directly into the tunnel, where we found the seven tunnel men lying dead along the road. They were removed to the surface, and the check list showed that all men were accounted for but Fire Bosses Farley and Fessler. Inspectors Brennan and Curran joined me at 8 P. M. and we started to search for the missing men. It was found that No. 5 seam gangway west of the tunnel was closed to No. 72½ chute, and we decided that the men must be under the fall, although the entire mine was searched in the hope that they might be found. Work to reopen the gangway from the tunnel was begun immediately, and also to clean up to the cave on the west side to the airway. After securing the airway, it was decided to push all work from the tunnel, believing that the 175 pounds of dynamite that the tunnel men had taken in the day previous had exploded and that Farley and Fessler would be found near that spot. Inspectors Fenton and Lamb came to the mine Sunday and fully approved of the work being done, and on Monday Charles Enzian, mining engineer of the U. S. Bureau of Mines, arrived, and after a careful investigation decided that the dynamite had exploded; but on Sunday morning, August 10, we uncovered the dynamite box and found it intact. Inspector Brennan returned that evening and the next day we decided to have the gas removed that had gathered on the west side, and examine the headings and places there. We had personal charge of this work and by evening everything was clear and examined, but nothing could be found.

On Friday morning, August 15, about 3 A. M., the body of Farley was found, and at 10.30 that night the body of Fessler.

Cause of the disaster: At No. 74 chute the timber lay straight across the gangway at right angles to it, showing that the force started from that point. West of that point the timber slanted west, and similarly to the east. Farley and Fessler had evidently been sitting on the boxes west of the tunnel, waiting for Lorenz and Farrel, whom they

knew were coming out that way, when they heard some disturbance and ran in to see what it was. At that moment the stump pillar at the corner of No. 74 chute gave way, and there was an outburst of gas that closed the gangway and checked the air currents, breaking the air connections as an explosion would have done. The man at the bottom of the slope thought there had been an explosion and telephoned to the surface. Fire Bosses Murphy, McGinley and Schoffstall organized a party of nine and went down to investigate. Just as they reached the mouth of the tunnel, the men working in the tunnel arrived at the point where the gas had receded from the fall, the gas was ignited and exploded with terrific violence, killing the nine rescuers and the seven tunnel men, and passing out through the headings on the west side killed Farrel and injured Lorenz so badly that he died that night. Farley and Fessler were caught in the first fall and instantly killed. The recovering of these bodies was extremely dangerous, as the seam pitches 70 degrees.

An inquest was held by Coroner Moore and the following verdict given: "We find that the men came to their death as the result of an explosion of gas in Farley's district, and from the evidence we fail to find that it was caused by negligence of the company or contributory negligence on the part of anyone else."

#### CONDITION OF COLLIERIES

##### PHILADELPHIA AND READING COAL AND IRON COMPANY

Lincoln, Good Spring and Brookside Collieries. — Ventilation, drainage and condition as to safety good.

##### SUMMIT BRANCH MINING COMPANY

Williamstown and Short Mountain Collieries.—Ventilation and condition as to safety good; drainage fair.

##### LEHIGH VALLEY COAL COMPANY

Blackwood Colliery.—Ventilation, drainage and condition as to safety good.

#### IMPROVEMENTS

##### PHILADELPHIA AND READING COAL AND IRON COMPANY

Lincoln Colliery.—An inside slope was sunk 75 feet on the Lykens Valley No. 2 vein from the sixth lift, east gangway.

An electric hoist was installed at No. 2 vein slope, which is being sunk to the eighth lift.

Electric haulage was extended on seventh and eighth lift gangways and on the West No. 5 vein, sixth lift gangway, to breast No. 215.

A new frame office, check-off house and lamp house were erected.

An extension was built to the shops and a Snyder drill press and a Boye lathe installed. Two automatic steam dumps were installed at breaker.

Electric lights were installed in the houses and on the streets of the town.

Good Spring Colliery.—A tunnel 288 feet was driven at No. 1 slope, second lift, from Holmes to Orchard vein.

A tunnel is being driven on the third lift from a point opposite breast No. 50, East Mammoth vein gangway, to the Orchard vein,