



Reports

Delagua Mine

A. E. THOMPSON, 34 YEARS,
RESCUE APPARATUS MAN.

About 1:30 P. M., somebody from Delagua telephoned to Hastings that there was a fire in the mine, and wanted rescue apparatus immediately. I was at the polls when Mr. Cameron came down and told me there was a fire in the Delagua mine, and for me to get the rescue apparatus, that the train was there waiting. As I reached the Hastings office, they said Lewis wanted me on the 'phone. It was Mr. Rees, instead of Mr. Lewis, at the phone, and he said the mine had just exploded. That was somewhere around two o'clock. We got the rescue apparatus loaded, mine went into Hastings, and got some of the helmet men out, and came to Delagua as soon as we could get here. Mr. Cameron and myself and Holman and some others got to Delagua about 2:45. Got the stuff out of the car and looked around for the management, and found they were in the mine. Mr. Cameron, Billy Murray, Carr Robson and myself went in through the fan without helmets. Mr. Cameron said we would go in and see what the conditions were in the air course. The

ventilation had been stopped, and we progressed down the entry about 600 or 700 feet, between the 3rd and 4th North, and came back. Examined the cross-cuts, and found the air was going in through this opening. On Mr. Cameron's suggestion, I came out and got men started in with material to brattice up the stoppings as far as the 4th North. In the meantime, Mr. Cameron stayed inside to take charge of the work, and I was back and forth with the party getting material in. I think I made four trips with the party in the material gang.

At 5:30, we had reached a point inside the 4th north pass-by. Mr. Cameron and Billy Murray went around the empty track; Mr. Robson and myself went around the loaded track. We met on the inside of the parting, and then advanced probably 75 feet along the entry. The air was pretty heavy at that time. Came back to the end of the parting and sat there about ten minutes to see if it was clearing up any. On the second advance, we reached a point opposite the slant from the main entry to the back entry. Mr. Cameron asked us how we felt, and all of us said our heads were in a whirl, and he said his was too. He said we had better go back, and

we went back to a cross-cut opposite the hoist, and met Getchell, Jolly and Walker coming down the back entry. Mr. Cameron suggested that I come outside with Mr. Rees and go and tell the boarding-house to have lunch sent to the mouth of the mine and have it sent in, so they could keep at work. While I was doing this, Getchell, Jolly, Walker and Griffiths went on down the 4th North entry and got down as far as the fire, so they said. Mr. Getchell sent Walker out to tell us to come in with the helmets and fire extinguishers. When we came back, the C. F. & I. rescue car had arrived, and Evans and his party were sitting by their helmets ready to go in. Bert Lloyd, Pollard, Evans, another Cokedale man and Walker and myself went in. Evans and I were the last two getting in with the extinguishers. I stopped and told Mr. Warfield not to allow anybody to pass in without some material of some kind, and send extinguishers in as fast as he could get men to follow us.

We six went down on the original route through the cross-cut into the 4th North entry, down the 4th north entry opposite a hauling cross-cut between the 2nd and 3rd west entries. There we found the fire. Mr. Getchell and Griffiths

were on the intake side, about 40 feet behind that cross-cut, and told us the fire was in the next cross-cut. Lloyd and Walker went into the cross-cut and emptied their extinguisher. We followed with our extinguisher. Pollard claimed there was something with his apparatus, and he retired. That left 5 of us. The fire was now so we could get over it; and as somebody had reported the fire to be in room 7 on the 4th west, we started in there. Just through the cross-cut it had burned, and the end of the cross-cut had fallen down. The door was gone and timbers had burned down and some of the props in cross-cut were still smouldering. There was a little time elapsed between the time we put the fire out. We fell back and Griffiths and Gatchell and others talked over conditions that might exist inside. I fell back to dump. The other men with helmets had gone in through the cross-cut before I got started. Just around the turn at the 4th west, there were two mules and two loads. I found an electric light hanging on the wire. I tried to figure out what the signal was, and advanced on down the entry quite a ways, and then figured that maybe they had wanted me to stay there and had hung the

lamp up for that purpose, that they might go on down the 4th west and come out the 3rd west. I returned to the cars and waited a few minutes; then went on back and through the cross-cut and asked them if they had come out. They told me not, and to go back and take a stand in there and see if I could see anything of them. I heard them coming, and advanced on to meet them. Found them coming out with four other men. Two of them had pulled off their helmets and given them to two of the diggers. I pulled mine off and put it on one of the other fellows. The exchange took place just at the entrance of the 4th west entry. The digger I had given my helmet to started out following the other four with helmets, but turned around and came back, saying he was going to wait for his partner. Then Evans and myself, the Cokedale man and two diggers stayed there. One of the diggers was overcome and was down; I looked around and the fellow with the helmet on was down. I told Evans that we had better get just as far toward the rescue party as we could, as a foot advanced toward them would save a foot for them. He said he was feeling all right and agreed we would go as far as we could. The Cokedale man got up and ran out without a helmet. Evans said

we will take this helmet off this fellow and put it on you, and I will get behind this car, where I will be out of the return air so much. We tried to get the helmet off the digger, but he held the hose tight, and we had a hard time. I finally got the helmet on, but didn't get it inflated or the oxygen turned on. The last thing I remember, there was a mule and car somewhere between us and the cross-cut where the fire was, as I remember crawling over the mule, and that was the last thing I remember until I was brought to out in the haulage road of the 4th north. The helmet men had come in and gotten me, as well as the two diggers. We were all out except Evans. I remember somebody said Evans was out, and somebody said he was not out. Some one asked if there was anybody there who would put on a helmet to go in after him. Cornwall volunteered, and they put a helmet on him. I don't remember anything that transpired after that until I got outside. It was probably ten o'clock when we rescued the four men.

CLIFFORD A SWANK, 33, ELECTRICIAN FOUR
MONTHS IN DELAGUA; TWO YEARS FORMERLY.

About 1:30, some one called my attention to the smoke coming out of the fan. I ran there with Woodward. As I passed the mouth of the mine, Evans was lighting his lamp. He told me not to shut off the fan unless it was on fire, until he got the men out; that we might have to slow it down for a time. The power house man had shut off the current, and the fan was slowing down. I told Woodward not to shut down the fan, and gave him orders to start up again. It never wholly stopped. When I reached the fan house, two men came out and said the fire was in the mine. Several men came up. Jim Young and others. McMullen went on top of the fan and reported that it was not hot. I told Read, who was one of the two men to come out the air course, to go to the mouth of the mine and see what word Evans sent out. I waited at the fan for 5 or 10 minutes for some word about the fan. Didn't hear anything, but did hear talk about water and I went to the mouth. Motor had come out when I arrived. Young said

something about hose. Five minutes later, Young started in, and said he would go and measure the pipe connection. Kilpatrick was with him. Young gave orders to put the hose in the car connection end out. Tom Jennings, MacLeod and others were standing by the motor in the mouth waiting for men to drag up the hose. Jennings told them to step back as no one could tell what might happen. I was assisting Jennings to load the hose, and had loaded about 20 feet when the explosion occurred. I was leaning over the car and was only slightly burned. The sound of the explosion was like the dumping of a pit car. I pulled myself together and ran to the fan without the slightest thought that any damage had been done at the mouth of the mine, although the air was black with smoke and dust. Fan had stopped. I walked down the road and met Jennings mourning about the death of his brother.

He says he was at the mouth of No. 2 mine about 10 o'clock Sunday and saw two cars of water going in, but does not know the names of men in charge. Later, he was at his station in the haulage house and inquired why more trips did not come out of the 3rd North. He was told that the rails were so wet they could not handle the cars.

Only one trip came out during the forenoon. About 4 o'clock on Sunday afternoon, he met Bennett, the motorman, and Bennett said he had been watering the slope of No. 3 with Smith ever since 7 o'clock in the morning. He did not say whether he had hauled water in, but did remark that he had been using hose.

ED McMULLEN, 39 YEARS,
WITH COMPANY SINCE APRIL.

About 1:40 P. M., Tuesday, I was in the office. Lewis and W. J. Evans also there. Some top man ran in and called attention to smoke coming out of No. 3 fan. We looked out the window and saw it. Lewis, Evans and I started from the office. They went to the mouth of the mine. I went immediately to the fan. The boys had begun to lay hose from the Jap house past the fan to the mouth of the mine. Examination of the fan house disclosed that the fire was not there, although my impression was that it was not very far away. The smoke first seen was not thick, but rather white. I then went to the mouth of the mine. Young and his man "Sport" and others were there. Young was giving instructions as to laying the hose for the purpose of filling barrels at the mouth of the mine. I then returned to the fan house, thinking that the fire must be close to the fan, and went on top and felt of the casing, and found no heat. It was cool. Had some boys disconnecting the hose to take down in the mine, Young having suggested that this would be

necessary. The barrels at the mouth of the slope were filled from a hose from the tank. I then observed that the smoke at the fan house was very dense. I walked hurriedly toward the fan to make another examination. Just before I reached there, the smoke cleared noticeably, and I stopped and watched it for half a minute; it came out white again. I then returned to the mouth of the mine, or started, when the explosion occurred. I was standing about 30 feet from the fan house, and heard the rattle of planks and boards, and the falling of material, rather than any severe noise and shock. The smoke and dust were exceedingly dense, and when I started back to the fan to stop it, it was rattling as if a plank or board were striking on the blades. When I got there, I couldn't enter on account of the smoke. Then I started to the over house. Had difficulty in crossing tracks on account of smoke. When I got to the power house, I called to the engineer who was just coming out of the sub-station to pull the switch, which he did. I spent about five minutes there at the sub-station with Charles Young, who was inquiring about his father. I told him the last I saw of his father was at the mouth of the mine. Then

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I returned to the fan house and met Swank coming over the hill to the fan, which had stopped, and found he was injured. Then I hurried to the mouth of the slope past MacLeod, saw that he was injured, and the Bennett boy who was injured, who was hollowing on the hill that his brother was killed. I passed by the slope mouth and saw a number were injured and killed, and started to the office and 'phoned to Hastings to send all the help they could, doctors and helmet men. Right after that, I met Billy Murray, and he told me he was going to brattice the mouth of No. 2. Told him I would get the boards and had a bunch of Creeks get the boards. I went to the fan at No. 1 and told Read to come with me, and found fan running all right. When I came back, I looked for Mr. Woods, the fan tender from No. 3, and sent him to the No. 1 fan, and told him to stay there until he was relieved.

STATEMENT OF F. E. GOVE
FROM FOUR RESCUED MEN.

I had a talk with John Siomcis, John Brotevic, Joe Lugo and Tony Brovetic. These are the four men that were brought out at 10 o'clock Tuesday night with helmets. They went to work at about 6:30 in the morning near the end of the 4th West. They had their lunch together about 11 o'clock, and went back to work. They knew nothing of any trouble until a colored driver told John Brotevic that there was "big fire, get out John." John was tamping a shot. John Siomcis was loading a car. The latter told the other boys there was a big fire and to get out. They put on their jackets, got their dinner pails and started out the 4th West. One of the men was 200 or 300 feet behind the other three; when they got opposite room #6, they encountered smoke. It was very bad, but they pushed ahead until the three leaders were within 10 feet of the back entry. At this instant, the explosion occurred. The three leaders were knocked down, and the lights of all four were extinguished. The man in the rear was not knocked down, but lighted his lamp and came up to the other

three. In response to his questions, they all testified that they were dead, but he dragged them up and back to about room #8. The air was very bad, however, and they retreated to the face of the 4th west. They walled themselves off with canvas. At about four o'clock, the air became very bad, and they all fell down. At 4:30, they felt better and tried to get out. They were obliged to return to their canvas quarters. At 8 o'clock, they made another effort to escape, but were compelled to retreat. At 10 o'clock, four men with helmets noticed the light behind their canvas, came in to where they were, and proceeded to persuade them that the air was sufficiently good to permit their escape. They recognized Jolly and McAllister as two of the helmet men. Each helmet man took one of the four, and they proceeded to a point near the fire, when all four became exhausted. Thereupon two of the helmet men took off their helmets and put them on two of the diggers. Two of the diggers were taken out with helmets on, and later men returned with helmets and rescued the other two.

One of these four diggers, Joe Lugo, had a watch. Immediately after the explosion, he lighted his lamp and it was 2:02 P. M. This was about seven minutes after the driver first in-

formed them of the existence of a fire.

STATEMENT OF FRANK LEVECK, 25 YEARS OLD,
COAL DIGGER, AT DELAGUA FIVE WEEKS THIS
TIME; HAD WORKED BEFORE AT DELAGUA.

I went into the mine about 6:45 A. M. day of explosion, quitting work for lunch about 11:30. Took lunch in our room, No. 6 in 4th West off of 4th North. Two colored drivers, Lynch and Sampson, ate their lunch on some benches which they had about six feet from the door in the old haulage road, toward the back entry. Know this because my "buddie" went out to the place about 12:50 to find out if the drivers had gone home on account of election, as we were out of cars. The drivers were there eating, and said they would give us the first car after dinner. Would judge the distance between door and back entry to be 12 feet, and drivers were lying on benches about half way between that distance, or 6 feet from door. In few minutes, we did get a car and loaded it while Sampson was going after another one, and started to go home when we met Sampson coming in, he having left his mule and car standing between rooms 3 and 4 in 4th west. Sampson asked us if we had any water in our buckets, and we said no and asked him what he wanted with it. He said there was a fire at the door in the cross-cut. We went on out

and he went on down the entry, presumably looking for water. That was about 1:45 P. M. We (buddie and me) came on out to see where fire was and got to the parting and saw the smoke coming out pretty bad. Tried to make it under the smoke, but could not. Went back to our room in 4th west to get an axe to try to break through the cross-cut and get on to the main haulage road. Picked up two men in #5 room and two men in #4 room, with axes, and started back to the 4th North just about the time the driver was coming out with his loaded car. We tried the smoke once more, but could not make it. At this time, the smoke showed red on top, and it was "whishing" back and forth at the cross-cut, the smoke rolling over and over. We went back to the first cross-cut inside the 4th west on the back entry and started to break through the stopping. Sampson would not stay with us and went on through the door between the 3rd and 4th west, which I had closed to keep the smoke back from us. When he opened the door and went through, the fire was rumbling and whishing and the smoke rolling over and over. After he went through the door, I opened it once to see where he was, and could not see him at all. The

fire was then making quite a noise and roaring, spreading a short distance both ways in sort of puffs. Two of the men who came with my buddie and me forgot their lights, and the lights of the others had gone out. I had an acetylene light and it was all right, but was the only light among the six of us. I had a hard time to get the other two fellows with lamps to take a light from mine, but finally got them. My buddie and I took turns about at breaking the brattice, each chopping and scrapping back the dirt from the other side. It took us about four or five minutes to chop through the stopping and get into the main haulage road of the 4th North. The reason we did not try to get out by way of the back entry is because I knew it was full of water and had some falls in it, as I had tried to come down that way once before when I was working in the 3rd North, and had been compelled to go back and come by way of the haulage road. When we broke through and got on to the haulage road, the smoke was about 10 feet from us on the haulage road. We tried to make it out on the haulage road through the smoke beyond the fire, but could not, so started in to get out No. 2. As we were going in, we met Evans and the nipper

Red coming out. We tried to get them to come with us, but they wouldn't. The nipper asked us if we were afraid of a little fire like that. The other four men had followed my buddie and me through the brattice and were with us. We went on down the 4th north to the 13th east, and then went over to the 3rd north. We met the drivers from the Rock Island land on the entry and brought them with us, and probably picked up twenty-five men on the way before we finally got out. We went in on the 3rd North and got to No. 2 opening, and came out that way. We didn't feel any explosion at all, but about the time we got on to #2 road, we felt a little jar of the air, which was probably when the explosion happened. We thought nothing of it, and it never occurred to us that there had been an explosion of any kind. Didn't know anything about it until we came out of the mine and they told us. We had looked for an explosion while we were on the 4th North, but after we got beyond that and didn't feel anything, we thought it was all safe. On the way out on #2, we met Charles Young, who was going in with the motor. I tried to tell him there was a fire inside, but he said no, it was only a fall. I tried to convince him there was a fire, but came on out and he went on in. I

know now that he knew there was a fire, but didn't want to scare us by telling us and he was going in after the men. When we got out, the air was all clear around the mouth of the mine. I never did go up to the mouth of the slope, but talked to some folks around the office and then went home.

When the drivers ate in the cross-cut, they generally set their lamps down beside them somewhere. There was some canvas in the cross-cut, but it was fire proof canvas. There were also some chips lying around in there. I never knew of any trouble about this door before. Never thought how the door could have caught on fire. I know that the track layers have sometimes sat on the other side of the door, but couldn't tell if they were there this day. The smell from the smoke was that of heavy coal smoke. We were about 125 feet from the fire when working on the brattice to get through.

FRANK YENKO, 22, THREE YEARS AT DELAGUA.

Went to work at 7 A. M. in #3 Rock Island. Went in through #3. About 2 P. M., heard explosion. It was very loud. Smoke followed, and prevented many from getting out. I went back and sat down with thirteen or fourteen other men in the cross-out. Jap was among the number. We stayed there until about 11 o'clock Wednesday morning, and came out through No. 2.

