

TRIES TO SAVE LIVES OF MANY MINERS

Government Experiments With Methods of Preventing Disasters in America.

Washington, Jan. 11.—In its effort to stop the appalling loss of life in the coal mines of the country, the United States government is meeting with much success. For several months an experiment station under the direction of the technological branch of the United States geological survey has been in operation at Pittsburg, Pa., with the purpose of discovering the causes of mine disasters and suggesting a remedy.

Along with the establishment of this station and the agitation which preceded the necessary legislation, there has been a falling off in the number of deaths in the coal mines for the year, 1908, and while the official figures have not yet been obtained, it is stated that the number of deaths will be several hundred less than in 1907, which was an unusual year. In December, 1907, four explosions took the lives of 700 men, one of them—at the Monongah mine in West Virginia—being the greatest mining disaster in the history of the country. There were 356 victims. During 1908 there were but 200 deaths in which the loss of life was very heavy; one in January at the Hanna mine, in Wyoming, with a loss of 70 men; the other, November 28, at the Marianna mine, in Pennsylvania, which resulted in 154 deaths.

Already at the experiment station two discoveries have been made which will tend to decrease the number of deaths in the mines. It has been demonstrated that a number of the so-called "safety" explosives are anything but safe; in fact, the statement is made that with the present explosives used in mining, the miner takes his life in his hand every time he touches off a fuse. It is the purpose of the government to continue these experiments until the explosives of the country are standardized in such a manner that the miner will have a definite idea what these explosives will do.

After the government has gone far enough in its experiments, a bulletin will be issued recommending as permissible explosives such as standard dynamite. The facts learned concerning these explosives will be called directly to the attention of the state mining bureau as well as the operators.

Perhaps the most important and far-reaching experiments so far at the station are those in which it has been definitely shown that coal dust is an explosive equally as dangerous as the deadly fire damp. This has been a mooted question among mining engineers and miners alike, both insisting that it is impossible to explode coal dust unless there is gas present. That the coal dust will explode in a mine where there is no gas has been repeatedly shown to several hundred operators and miners at the testing stations. The experts at the station are now bending their struggles to discover some method by which this dust can be prevented from being a serious menace to the miners. Experiments in wetting it have been going on for some time, but nothing of a very definite nature has yet been learned, unless it is the fact that the coal dust does not ignite when there is a great amount of moisture in it. Every effort is being made at the station to come as close to the conditions in a mine as possible. The tests of various dynamites and powders used in blasting coal are being made in a mammoth boiler plate cylinder which has previously been filled with gas or coal dust. The cylinder is 100 feet long and 6 ft. in diameter. Safety valves have been placed all along

the top and are left unfastened in such a manner that whenever there is an explosion the valves open on their hinges. A series of port holes on the side, covered with one-half inch glass, enables those conducting the experiments to witness the results from an observation house sixty feet away. An explosive mixture of fire damp and air, or coal dust and air, is pumped into the cylinder and the explosive which is to be tested is shot into it from one end of the cylinder, so that the flame goes right into the fire damp or coal dust. Natural gas is used at this station for fire damp, because it corresponds very closely to this deadly gas. The carbon in which the explosives are placed is fired by electricity from the observation house which is parallel with the cylinder itself.

These investigations are expected to accomplish a double purpose; not only a reduction in the number of men killed in the mines, but also a saving of the waste in mining coal. The use of the improper explosives, as well as the improper use of suitable explosives, results annually in the waste of great amounts of coal. The use of too high charges in blasting, or the use of unnecessarily violent explosives shatters much good coal converting fuel into dust which may itself be explosive and become productive of much further damage. Such explosions often loosen the roof of a coal mine, which may fall later to be wasted, or productive of fatal accidents.

In addition to the actual experiments in testing explosives, important experiments are being made in rescue work. One part of the station has been fitted up as a miniature coal mine. This is a large glass-encased air tight room which contains difficult passages such as are found in coal mines. There are also various obstructions similar to what would be found in a mine after it had been wrecked by an explosion; also dummies weighing 150 to 200 pounds, representing asphyxiated miners. This room is filled with deadly gas and a rescue corps of men who are being trained in the work enter daily, in helmets which supply them with oxygen while they work. The men rescue in this chamber for two hours, removing obstructions, picking up the dummies, placing them on stretchers and carrying them away. There is also in the room a machine which records the amount of work a man may be expected to do while wearing one of these helmets. One-half of the large building in which this rescue room is located is used as an auditorium and several hundred miners and operators have watched the rescue drill through the large glass windows which separate the auditorium from the gas-filled chamber. Although there has been but little opportunity so far for the rescue corps to demonstrate its efficiency at the mines, still it has done some good work.

Once the helmeted men while fighting a mine fire succeeded in bringing an unconscious man to a place of safety, where he was given oxygen treatment and recovered his senses in a short time.

It is not the intention of the United States government to furnish rescue corps whenever there is a disaster. The present corps was organized with the idea of encouraging the mine owners and miners themselves to form such organizations. Invitations have been issued to operators throughout the country to send picked men to the experiment station, where they may watch the government rescuers at work and later go through the same training themselves, in order that they may gain the necessary confidence in the use of these helmets. Already a number of the large mining companies have taken advantage of this invitation and are organizing rescue corps at their mines, fully equipped with oxygen helmets.

In 1907 more than 5,125 men were killed in the coal mines of the country—a death rate of 4.86 for every 1,000 men employed. This is from three to four times as many men per thousand as were killed in any coal-producing country of Europe, where experimental stations such as the one in Pittsburg have been in operation for several years.

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Bill-Boards Latest Weapons in 'Frisco's War on Japs



San Francisco, Cal., Dec. 11.—

While the Japanese and American diplomats at Washington are merrily exchanging mutual assurances of goodwill and at the same time strengthening their military and naval forces, the agitation against Japanese cheap labor throughout the Pacific coast shows no signs of abatement.

The latest outbreak has occurred in San Francisco, where the billboards are blazoning forth an appeal to the public to use "the only effective remedy at hand" and refrain from patronizing the Japanese.

Large four-sheet posters, done patriotically in red and blue ink on white paper, command the attention of the passerby on every corner.

"Who wants an Oriental California?" is the greeting.

"Who prefers Mongolian to Caucasian standards?" is the succeeding query.

"Who believes that his industrial activity is immune to Oriental competition?"

Then in large red letters:

"THE YANKEE DOODLE BOY" The theatrical taste of the teatraging public is constantly changing and lucky indeed is the author who can evolve some "play delicia" which will succeed in tickling the "amusement palate" of the great majority. Such, however, has been Halton Powell's good fortune with "The Yankee Doodle Boy" the music play which Powell & Cohen will present here at the Elks' Theatre on Monday night.

The play depicts the many humorous adventures of "Bud Hicke" one of those slinky, flashily dressed, decidedly independent young fellows who are typical of our great cities. Bud hails from Chicago and in the first act is dazzling the natives of the small suburban town of Downer's Grove, Ill., with his "glad rags" as he terms his clothes. The pretty young country girls look good to Bud and he makes a deep impression by telling of his great wealth and many remarkable achievements, which exist only in his fertile imagination. However, he establishes himself as a great favorite and is having a most enjoyable time when his "butting in" propensities get the best of him and he mixes in a family quarrel. Bud simply can't stand idly by and see a woman get the worst of it, so he in-

terferes and thereby brings on a climax. In the second and third acts all the characters have "skidded" to Chicago and are in a glorious mix-up. Finally all is straightened out and ends happily through the strenuous efforts of "The Yankee Doodle Boy."

During the action of the three acts a new original song hits are introduced, as well as several pretty dancing numbers.

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