

BLACK SUNDAY AT FERNIE.

LITTLE MINING TOWN THE SCENE OF WEeping AND WAILING

Saturday and Sunday Given Over to Rescue Work and Funerals—The Probable Number of Dead 109—Names of Those so Far Taken Out—Special Cemetery Prepared For the Dead—The Relief Fund in Fernie—The Cause of the Disaster Still a Matter of Conjecture—Prompt Action of Directors in Toronto.

(Special Despatch to The Globe.)

THE DEAD AT FERNIE.

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| Steve Morgan, | Joseph Salgala, |
| Willie Robinson, | V. Johnson, |
| John Leadbenter, | G. Altabelli, |
| Thomas Johnson, | Thos. Fearful, Jr., |
| John McLeod, | Frank Salter, |
| W. H. Brierly, | Jos. Tuka, |
| John Korman, | Ronald Jones, |
| Walter Wright, | Adrew Hovern, |
| Thomas Glover, | Jas. Cartledge, |
| Owen Holmes, | Wm. Ferguson, |
| M. J. Fleming, | Samuel Hand, |
| Thos. Stephens, | John Kearney, |
| John Hughes, | John McIntyre, |
| Harry Wilson, | George Housby, |
| Tony Matseo, | Wm. Neace, |
| Wm. McPhail, | John Zelonika, |
| Joseph Welsh, | A. Fredericks, |
| J. Walsh, | Amos Buck, |
| Edgar Reid, | Jos. Petros, |
| James Flora, | Phillip Chioda, |
| And. Pestolick, | John Kravets, |
| Rennie McMillan, | John Halley, |
| Hy. Hawkins, | E. A. Brown, |
| Albion Carlson, | Geo. Rutledge, |
| Wm. Love, | |

Fernie, B.C., May 25.—By to-night it is expected that fully one hundred bodies will have been recovered from the mine at Coal Creek. Nearly fifty had been taken out by Saturday midnight, and forty or more were then in sight. All the dead came from No. 3 mine, and from the higher levels of No. 2. Those on the lower levels of No. 2 are harder to get at, and it is evident the explosion originated there. As the timekeeper was killed, and as his notebook was not made up for the shift in which the accident occurred, it is impossible to get at present any more than a partial list of those still in the mine. The bodies so far brought out have been identified as above. It will be noticed that about over a fourth of the number are **foreigners**. To add to the painfulness of the situation, there has been no train service from Fernie, owing to trouble in the mountains, since Tuesday last, and consequently freight, passengers, mails and express have been tied up.

The Relief Fund.

The relief fund has already reached \$5,000, the C.P.R. directors having contributed \$3,000. The fund was started Saturday by the Board of Trade, \$1,100 being subscribed on the start. It is doubtful if the remaining bodies will be exposed, owing to the heat in the mine. All religious services were cancelled in Fernie to-day, so as not to prevent or delay the rescue work. The Relief Committee is meeting daily to alleviate the necessities arising from the calamity. Hon. Mr. Prior, Minister of Mines, left Victoria on Saturday for Fernie, and will be here Monday.

The Indifferent Slavs.

The conduct throughout of the Slavs, of whom there are several hundred in Fernie, has been one of stolidness and indifference. They have been conspicuous by their absence in the work of rescue, while the English-speaking residents, working under the Coal Company's corps of four doctors, have done heroic work.

A Town of Mourning.

The Town of Fernie bears all the evidences of the passage of the angel of death. In the miners' section there were few of the cottages which did not display the badge of mourning. On some of the doors it was a large piece of black crepe to signify that the head of the family had gone, and on others, and far too many, the crepe was set upon a ribbon of white, to indicate that the victim was but a youth, who had been attracted to the mines by reason of the fact that they offered him the speediest means of earning a man's wages. The badge of death is not posted until the body of the victim has been recovered. This rule has been generally

observed, and although there are close upon a hundred houses waiting for their dead, yet the crepe does not go up until the corpse has been identified at the English Church, where it remains only so long as may be necessary to perfect the funeral arrangements and start for the cemetery.

A Day of Funerals.

The day was wholly given over to funerals, and at the cemetery it frequently happened that four or five little circles would be around open graves at the same time. The victims are to have a cemetery of their own. It forms part of the old burying grounds, and is situated upon the top of a bench overlooking the town. Here a gang of men is engaged steadily in digging graves and in covering up the bodies as they are lowered into them. The graves are lined up 25 in a row, and Catholics and Protestants will lie side by side, with nothing but a pathway to separate them in their last sleep. Blood and social ties have been observed so far as possible. In one group there are four brothers, in others there are father and son, while earthly friendships have been observed by reserving and ticketing adjoining pits for men who had been comrades until death struck them down. In some such cases one of the bodies has been recovered and buried, and the grave alongside stands ticketed and waiting for the other.

The Bereaved.

Scores of widows and children thronged the cemetery all day. In many cases the bereaved had not been permitted to see the remains, and the sight of the freshly-turned earth seems to open the floodgates of their sorrow. There were innumerable cases of little children too young to understand endeavoring to comfort, but each family appeared to be too full of its own sorrow to realize the affliction and need of solace of the other.

The Rescue Work.

Since midnight Saturday the efforts of the men engaged on the rescue work have been devoted to making the mine safer for them in their mission of reclaiming the bodies, as it has been shown that nothing in the shape of mine timber has been left in the vicinity of the explosion. That no accidents have happened so far is due solely to the excellent roof of the mine. Considerable difficulty was encountered during the earlier hours of the morning, as the gas was very oppressive, but upon the whole very good progress was made.

Narrow Escapes.

There are the usual number of narrow escapes reported, but none of those who escaped know anything concerning the cause of the explosion, and those who knew are doubtless among the dead. There was little of the spectacular in the explosion, save the blowing off of the roof of the fan house. This was accompanied by a rush of fire and a volley of coal dust and fine particles of coal and rock. The roof of the fan-house went because it was the weakest point in the structure, and it was fortunate that it was so, as it gave the explosion a vent without working any injury to the fan itself, which did not stop working for an instant. The value of this was important in that it secured the clearing of the mine of gases much sooner than could otherwise have been attained. The blowing off of the roof of the fan house was witnessed by a number of persons in the company boarding house at the mine. They say that the force of the explosion was so great that the roof went up until it did not appear to be any larger than a man's hand, and was followed immediately after by a column of fire and coal dust and small pieces of coal, which lasted several minutes.

Cause of Disaster.

As to the cause of the disaster all is conjecture, but the theory held by many in the light of past experiences is that the explosion was caused in the first instance by some of the miners smoking in the mine and lighting matches. There have been a number of convictions in the local Magistrate's court for this offence.

An Exciting Incident.

There was an exciting time in town this evening, and for a while it was feared there would be a breach of the peace. It is said that when the news of the frightful calamity at the mine was first brought to town, a Provincial policeman named Stevens, on hearing that there were 150 killed at the mine, made the thoughtless retort that it was a pity that there was not another 150 killed. The remark did not come to

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(Continued from Page 1.)

the ears of the miners until this evening, when they heard the evidence of the men who were alleged to have heard Stevens make the remark. They then marched in a body fully three hundred strong to the recreation grounds, in the centre of the town, and calling upon Chief Constable Burns laid the case before him in the presence of the accused Stevens, and demanded that he forthwith be ordered from the town. The Chief endeavored to reason with the angry miners that they should give the accused a fair trial, but the men were all in a high state of excitement, and would not listen to what the Chief had to say. They insisted upon the accused leaving town forthwith, and in order to avert the possibility of something worse happening to him the Chief decided that Stevens should go. The verdict was received with tremendous cheers by a crowd swollen to fully six hundred, and the accused was forthwith hustled through the principal street of the town amid the jeers of all. At 11 o'clock the crowd had passed outside the city limits. Chief Burns is accompanying Stevens on his trip. He was not given time by the miners to change his clothing.

Additional Details.

The accident occurred on Thursday evening at 7.15 o'clock, being the result of an explosion in No. 2 mine, the concussion extending to No. 3 mine. As near as the officials can tell at present there were about one hundred and thirty men in the two mines. Seventeen of those working in No. 3 came out safely immediately following the explosion. Four more were rescued alive, leaving probably one hundred and ten killed. None of the dead taken out up to Saturday night were killed by burning, but met their death by shock and after damp. The rescuing parties are working steadily, and are being relieved every few hours. From the present outlook it is probable that every body will have been taken out by Sunday night. There is no indication of fire, a not uncommon successor to such a disaster as this. Number 3 mine remains in fairly good condition. Number 2, as far as explored, nearly to a thousand feet, is fairly satisfactory, but the full effect of the explosion cannot be ascertained until the mines have been completely inspected. There is very little damage to the surface machinery. The roof of No. 2 fan house was blown off, but has since been repaired. The relief parties have worked heroically under the supervision of T. R. Stockett, General Superintendent, Government Mine Inspector Dick and R. G. Drinnan, Mine Superintendent. The latter (Drinnan) led the first rescue party immediately after the explosion, and was overcome and had to be carried out, but subsequently recovered and re-entered the mine. Every assistance is being rendered by the officials of the coal company to the orphans and widows.

The Inspector's Report.

Government Mine Inspector Dick thoroughly inspected the mines only the day before the explosion, and made an excellent report upon them. It is quite impossible to suggest the cause of the accident at present.

Mr. Sifton's Sympathy.

Ottawa May 25.—(Special.)—The Minister of the Interior received intimation of the Fernie disaster in the following message:—"The Fernie Board of Trade would urgently call the attention of all people that a great calamity has overtaken the town by a mine explosion. One hundred and fifty men have been killed and much distress prevails. Kindly collect subscriptions and forward same to the Bank of Commerce Relief Fund, Fernie." Mr. Sifton yesterday sent a reply as follows:—"Mayor of Fernie, B. C.—I am shocked and distressed beyond measure at the terrible calamity which has overtaken your town. Am wiring \$250 as a small personal contribution to relief. Can I do anything to help you?"

Lord Strathcona cabled the Secretary of State to find out whether William Russell and William Parker were among the victims of the disaster at Fernie. Inquiry at Fernie elicited the reply that both persons were safe, and a message to that effect was sent to the High Commissioner in London.

Lord Minto wired the following message to the Manager of the Crow's Nest Pass Coal mines at Fernie, B.C.:—"Deeply grieved at the terrible accident. Kindly send me any particulars as to possibilities of rescue, and if you have started any relief to families will gladly assist. (Signed) Minto."

Nova Scotians Perish.

Halifax, May 25.—(Special.)—It is now learned that forty Nova Scotians were employed in the Fernie, B.C., collieries, and great anxiety is felt as to their safety. So far the reports indicate that the bodies of seven men from this Province have been identified. They are:—John Stewart, John McIntyre and Stellarton, R. McMullen of Glace Bay, and William McDonald, Malcolm McLeod, Frank Salter and George Burney of Westville. The latter two had worked at Fernie only ten days, having left Nova Scotia for the west on May 1. McBurney is the fourth member of his family to meet death in a mine. His father was killed in the great explosion in the Drummond colliery at Westville in 1873, and two brothers by falls of coal within recent years.

Directors Meet in Toronto.

Hon. Geo. A. Cox, President of the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company, and Mr. Elias Rogers, Managing Director returned on Saturday from Montreal, in which city they were when the news of the disaster reached them on Friday. A meeting of the directors was held subsequent to their return to take such action as might be necessary with regard to the disaster. Senator Cox, the President, and Mr. Robert Jaffray, Vice President, had already, immediately on hearing of the disaster, wired to Mr. T. R. Stockett, the Superintendent of Mine at Fernie, to do everything possible to alleviate the distress and suffering following the calamity, and to spare no expense. President Cox's telegram which was sent from Montreal, read as follows:—

"Thos. R. Stockett, Fernie.

"Have just learned with profound sorrow of the serious accident to the mine, resulting in so serious a loss of life. Please convey to the families of the dead and to all sorrowing friends the sincere sympathy of myself and co-directors. You are hereby authorized to make such expenditures as you deem necessary to alleviate suffering and to add to the comfort of any who may be ill, and to assist those who depend upon the dead for support, and such other expenditures in connection with this affair as you think best. Also convey our thanks to those who are so bravely doing the rescue work. Geo. A. Cox."

Mr. Rogers Leaves For Fernie.

The deepest regret was expressed by every member of the board at the ter-

rible calamity, and it was unanimously determined that no effort and no expense should be spared in acting up to the spirit of Mr. Cox's telegram. Mr. Rogers, the Managing Director, and Mr. J. H. Tonkin, the new General Manager, who was in Toronto when the accident occurred, left yesterday for the scene of the disaster. In the meantime, Mr. Stockett is in charge, and is doing everything possible along the lines of the instructions telegraphed him by the directors, as is shown by the following telegram, received yesterday morning from him by the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company:—"At 10 to-night (Saturday) forty-six bodies recovered, twenty-five buried this afternoon. Everything progressing favorably considering quantity of gas encountered; more satisfied than ever there is no fire. We are nearly to the full extent of main levels of No. 2 and working in the branches. Have gone through whole of No. 3 and recovered all bodies therefrom. Every attention and respect have been shown dead, and necessary assistance to needy relatives in accordance with instructions."

The Fernie Appeal.

In spite of the prompt action taken by the directors much agitation naturally prevails in Fernie, and the following despatch was on Saturday telegraphed to the leading newspapers of Canada:—"The Fernie Board of Trade would urgently call the attention of all people that a great calamity has overtaken the town by a mine explosion. One hundred and fifty men have been killed, and much destitution prevails. Kindly collect subscriptions and forward same to the Bank of Commerce relief fund, Fernie." A director of the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company, discussing the above message, pointed out that the number of dead quoted is happily considerably in excess of the actual number of fatalities, which is placed with some definiteness at 100. The destitution referred to also, he said, would apparently have reference to possible necessities of the future rather than to actual existing wants, as the company officials have been most positively instructed to prevent any such situation arising. He expressed further the hope that any subscriptions that might be sent to Fernie by the public in response to this appeal would be carefully set apart as a portion of the provision which will be made for the families of the bereaved, and would not be expended in supplying such immediate necessities as the company officials are already more than anxious and fully able to attend to.

Cause of the Calamity.

With regard to the cause of the disaster, the directors have received no information. The accuracy of the statement contained in a C. P. R. press despatch to the effect that the explosion was due to dust is questioned, in view of the fact that the mine had been examined only the day previous to the disaster by Provincial Mining Inspector Dick, and favorably reported on. It is, however, impossible to speak positively on this point. The dust in question is such as is common to soft coal mines, danger from which is usually averted by the simple process of keeping the mine damp.