

MINE SAFETY

By DENNIS J. KEENAN, State Mine Inspector, Barnesboro, Pa.

The greatest number of accidents in coal mines are caused by falls of roof and coal. Since the beginning of coal mining in the United States, more than a million men have learned too late that there is no such thing as a roof that is "not so bad."

There are only two kinds of roof—"GOOD" and "BAD."

Since becoming inspector of the 15th Bituminous District on Jan. 2, 1938, forty-eight (48) men have lost their lives in the pits of the district. Of this number, 29 were killed by falls of roof or coal—and of this number, only two were killed by falls of coal. The other 27 losing their lives by falls of roof. Sixty percent of all the fatalities were caused by falls.

Since the majority of fatal accidents are caused by roof falls, we can see that this condition is one that merits extraordinary attention, and must be guarded against all of the time when any person is exposed to this condition. In passing judgment of the condition of the roof it is not uncommon to find here and there an official and workman who believe that a roof is "pretty good" or "not so bad" when sound tests tell them that it is not solid.

Use Enough Timber

Roof this is not solid is not safe, and even although it does present a solid sound when tested, there should never be less timber set than the minimum amount required by the standard



plan adopted at the mine. In no case should the matter of timbering working or other places be neglected even for one second. There is only one way to protect persons exposed to roof conditions and that is to set timber promptly and as the roof conditions require.

Testing the roof by the vibration method is the best-known system of determining the condition of the roof, and this method is, by no means, always accurate, as the thickness of the layers of overlying strata may be too great to give off the proper vibration wave to be picked up by the finger tips.

Accidents from falls of roof and coal can be eliminated or reduced to a very low figure if the roof is examined frequently during each shift, after all stoppage of work in the place, by timbering as required by the plan adopted where the roof is good, and protective cross timber at all times at the working face, even where the roof is good.

Law Charges Mine Foreman

The Pennsylvania Bituminous Mining Laws require that a mine foreman be placed in full charge of all of the inside mine workings, and all persons employed inside the mine. The mine foreman is the chief law enforcement officer in the mine, and upon him rests the full responsibility for the safe operation of the mine. He is responsible for the health and safety of the persons employed inside the mine and for the protection and preservation of the property.

The mine foreman must be a duly qualified person. To take charge of a non-gaseous mine he must possess a first-grade or second-grade mine foreman's certificate. To have charge of a gaseous mine he must possess a first-grade mine foreman's certificate.

The mine foreman is responsible for the strict enforcement of the mining laws, and if the workings become so extensive that he is

personally unable to carry out the provisions of the law, he must employ a duly qualified person to act as assistant mine foreman. The latter also are held responsible for carrying out the provisions of the law in the sections of the mine under their supervision.

Assistant's Qualifications

To act as an assistant mine foreman at a non-gaseous mine, the person serving in this capacity must possess either of the mine foreman's certificates, or a first-grade assistant or second-grade assistant mine foreman's certificate. At gaseous mines he must have a first-grade or a first-grade assistant's certificate.

In a gaseous mine, the mine foreman must employ a sufficient number of duly qualified fire bosses to make a complete examination of all working places, places adjacent to live workings, all roadways, and entrances to unenclosed places. The first examination must be made within a period of three hours of the appointed time for the men to enter the mine on their regular working shift. The fire boss also must make a second examination of all working places during the operating shift. The fire boss must possess first grade mine foreman, first grade assistant mine foreman or fire boss certificates in order to serve in this capacity.

Foreman Must Visit Places

The mine foreman must visit and examine or have examined by his assistants all working places at least once during each shift, and in mines not employing regular fire bosses, when the office of the mine inspector the roof is of such condition that it requires extraordinary attention, the inspector may require that two examinations of all such places be made to give the maximum amount of attention to the place.

The law requires that the mine foreman shall direct and see that every working place is properly secured by props, timbers, and shall see that no person is directed or permitted to work in an unsafe place, unless it be for the purpose of making it safe.

He shall also see that workmen are provided with sufficient props, cappings, timbers, lagging and wedges, all of which shall be reasonably suitable in size and delivered to their working places. He shall see that props are cut square at both ends, and as near as practicable to the proper length required for the place where they are to be used.

Workmen to Notify Foreman

Every workman in need of roof supports is required by law to notify the mine foreman or assistant mine foreman (or any other person delegated by the mine foreman) of his requirements at least one day in advance. In case of emergency any or all material required for the safe working of the place may be ordered immediately upon discovery of any danger. If for any reason the necessary material cannot be supplied when required, the mine foreman or his assistant shall instruct the workmen to vacate the place until the material needed is supplied.

The mine foreman or assistant mine foreman shall direct and see that as the miners advance their excavation, all dangerous and doubtful pieces of coal, slate and rock overhead are taken down, or at once carefully secured against falling on the workmen.

Any workman who neglects to carry out, or disobeys the instructions of the mine foreman or assistant mine foreman in securing his working place, shall be suspended or discharged by the mine foreman, and if such negligence or disobedience results in serious injury or loss of life to any person, the mine foreman shall give the name of said workman to the inspector for prosecution in accordance with the provisions of the Bituminous Mining Laws.

Must Examine Passageways

The mine foreman must see that the roof and sides of all passageways over which men are transported in a car or cars shall be examined by a competent person or persons within three hours before the appointed time for the day shift to enter the mine.

The mine foreman shall see that no person is employed to work in any mine until he has given satisfactory proof that he can do the work allotted to him without endangering the lives of his co-employees, unless said person is put to work with an experienced employee whose duty it shall be to

instruct such inexperienced person how to safety and properly perform his work.

The miner is required by law to examine his place before beginning work, and take down all dangerous slate, or otherwise make the place safe by properly timbering it, before commencing to mine or load coal.

Play Safe, Examine Roof Frequently, Timber as Required, Don't Delay—and Live to Play.

At least, such is the opinion of one prominent operator who expressed alarm at the trend of an increasing manpower shortage in the coal fields.

He pointed out a cut in the number of miners would bring a corresponding reduction in output. "More than a month's production would be lost each year," he explained.

This same spokesman declared that virtually every company in the region is anxious to hire qualified miners. But few are to be found.

He said he personally has turned away a number of would-be beginners because they could not find sponsors. The law requires that a newcomer to the trade work a year with an experienced miner. Then he is required to pass an examination before he receives his papers.

Sponsors who undertake the training of an apprentice do so at the cost of a probable wage cut, the operator declared. The loss occasioned by working as "buddies" with an inexperienced man was estimated as high as 50 per cent.

—You never knew a procrastinator who got anywhere.

—A timid man is one who feels he should limp a little when carrying a cane.

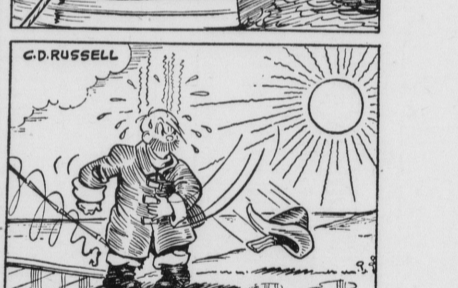
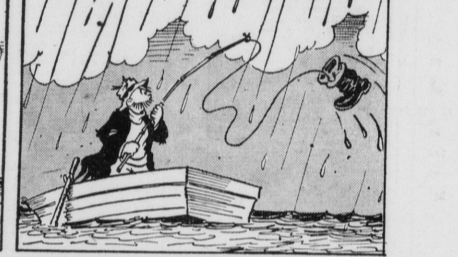
Miners' Pension May Bring Shortage In Pit Manpower

Work forces at district mines may fall off ten per cent when the mailman starts delivery of those \$100 a month pensions.

THE FLOP FAMILY



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SHOO! SCRAM!! GET OUT OF OUR GARDEN!

GWAK!

NOW STAY ON YOUR OWN SIDE OF THE FENCE WHERE YOU BELONG!

IT'S ALWAYS THAT OLD ROOSTER—THE HENS ARE SATISFIED TO STAY IN THEIR OWN YARD

WHAT? AGAIN? . . . HE ALWAYS FLIES ON TOP OF THE FENCE, THEY HOPE DOWN INTO THE GARDEN!

GWAK!

BY GEORGE, I'LL FIX HIM! IF HE GETS UP HERE AGAIN, HE'S GOT A SURPRISE COMING TO HIM!!

THIS IS GOING TO BE GOOD

HO HO HO! I GUESS THAT'LL TEACH HIM A LESSON—HE'S STUCK FAST!!!

PIPE DOWN WITH THAT SQUAWKING—I'LL TURN YOU LOOSE BUT I GIVE YOU KEEP AND PESTS OUT OF HERE

GWAK! GWAK!

STOP YOUR RACKET! IM NOT GOING TO CLIP YOUR WINGS! CRIM-A-NEUTLIES! THAT BOARD IS LOOSE!

FLAP

EEEK!!

GWALK GWALK GWALK

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