

DISASTER AT FRANK

It Is Feared One Hundred People Lost Their Lives at the Mining Town Wednesday ---The Latest Particulars.

FERNIE, APRIL 29.—(Special)—An awful catastrophe happened at Frank, Alta., this morning at 5 o'clock, in which one hundred coal miners met death.

It is not known how it happened, but it is reported that it was of volcanic origin or an earthquake. It is more probable, however, that there has been an explosion, which caused a slide off the mountain.

The C. P. R. track is covered fifty feet deep with debris, and the creek has been dammed, causing a flood in the town.

Six or more houses have been covered with rock, etc., and the inmates are supposed to be dead.

The wrecking train from Cranbrook went through Fernie without stopping at half-past ten. Many intended going down to assist.

Quite a few former Fernie men are supposed to be among the dead.

Disaster, in terrible form, has again visited the mining settlements of the Crow's Nest Pass.

This morning at 5 o'clock the little town of Frank, Alberta, just beyond the boundary line between British Columbia and the Northwest Territory, was awakened by a shock that startled the little community into terrified life. What happened is variously described, from a volcanic eruption to a tremendous slide. So terrific were its effects that it is little wonder that the first version of the affair received this morning ascribed the cause of the trouble to the most extraordinary causes. As the frenzied inhabitants rushed from their homes, the whole face of their environment presented a confused and appalling aspect. The rugged sides of the mountains which hang above the town, loomed from their position, had crowded down on the little town, wiping out many of the buildings and carrying desolation and death in its train.

Details at time of writing do not record whether the slide took place on the town side of the valley, in which the village clusters, or across the river in the foothills into which the French-Canadian Coal Company has driven its tunnels. The fact that over one hundred miners are stated to have perished, and that only a few houses were destroyed, however, lends the color of probability to the story that the slide took place on the side on which the coal mines were situated. The tunnels are described as being covered, thus entombing the men of the night shift.

The first intelligence of the disaster came to the Times about 9 o'clock this morning in a private dispatch, stating that a volcanic eruption had taken place at Frank, that seventy-five or one hundred people had lost their lives, that lava and ash was pouring into the river, backing water and threatening further disaster to the place. It was stated that the country for miles around was covered with volcanic ash.

The formation of the country and its immunity hitherto from visitations of this character caused grave doubts to be entertained regarding the reliability of these reports. Information was at once sought from the provincial mineralogist, the officials of the meteorological office, and other authorities in regard to the likelihood of such disturbance taking place. These gentlemen were all unanimous in their opinion that the cause of the disaster must be sought in other than a volcanic basis. The view was advanced by Mr. Robertson that it must have resulted from a slide off the mountain side, and the particulars which since come to hand make that the most probable reason of any yet advanced.

But while the cause of the catastrophe remained in some doubt, the swift effects of it were all too plainly apparent. The Times at once set the wires in operation and asked its correspondents to spare no expense in rushing the details. The fact that Frank is a small place and that the telegraphic facilities there are of the most meagre character, militated against obtaining an adequate report of the matter. The Times correspondent at Fernie was able to obtain the first definite information on the subject, as he did in the case of the Fernie disaster a little less than a year ago. He is now on his way to Frank, a distance of about forty miles from Fernie, and will be there to-night, having instructions from this paper to at once proceed to the scene and obtain and forward the fullest details of the affair.

The dispatch of the Times special correspondent set at rest the first wild theories in regard to volcanoes, scoria, lava, etc., and ascribes the cause which are in harmony with the opinions of those in a position to judge regarding their probability.

The effects of the disaster are remarkably similar to those attending the explosion of the Fernie mines on May 22nd of last year. The population of Frank is made up of coal miners, and those dependent directly on the miners, or whose businesses are contingent on the operation of the mines. Some of the latter belong to the French-Canadian Coal Co., and the output from them is at the rate of 300 tons a day. The manager is Mr. Gebro, who explored and mapped out the tunnels, but he is at present ill in Montreal. The engineer of the company is Mr. Frank Smith, whose wife is now in Victoria, and who was naturally much exercised regarding the safety of her husband. Mr. Smith was to leave Calgary some time this week to take up his work at Frank preparatory to succeeding Mr. Gebro as superintendent.

THE DEATH ROLL.

Most of the Victims Were Women and Children—Number of Miners Entombed.

Frank, N. W. T., April 29.—(Associated Press).—An earthquake happened about 4:30 this morning. The whole valley below the town for over a mile wide was shook up. Immediately after what happened is variously described, from a volcanic eruption to a tremendous slide. So terrific were its effects that it is little wonder that the first version of the affair received this morning ascribed the cause of the trouble to the most extraordinary causes. As the frenzied inhabitants rushed from their homes, the whole face of their environment presented a confused and appalling aspect. The rugged sides of the mountains which hang above the town, loomed from their position, had crowded down on the little town, wiping out many of the buildings and carrying desolation and death in its train.

Seven cottages in the town are buried under rock. The loss of life is estimated at over one hundred, mostly women and children.

Leitch, his wife and four children perishing among the dead. His three girls escaped. The mountain is still throwing up rock.

NO HOPE FOR MINERS

Little Chance of Getting Them Out Alive—The Slide Continues.

Cranbrook, B. C., April 29.—(Associated Press).—At 4:10 this morning a terrible volcanic eruption occurred at Frank, N. W. T. The earth opened up three-quarters of a mile in length, throwing rock fifty feet high and then down the side of the mountain into the town, ruining most of the buildings, damming up the Old Man's river with forty feet of rock and covering the railway track for two miles east of the station with from five to fifty feet of rock.

If also covered up the mouth of Frank mine, entombing 18 miners.

At 1 o'clock reports say that from seventy to eighty residents have been killed besides the 18 miners entombed in the mine, whom it is impossible to get at as the rock is still coming down the mountain over the mouth of the mine in vast quantities.

AID FOR SUFFERERS

Dominion Government Took Prompt Steps to Forward Relief.

Ottawa, April 29.—(Special).—Sir Wilfrid Laurier received a telegram from the president of the board of trade at Frank, on the Crow's Nest Pass roads, stating that an eruption took place at Turtle Mountain, that the Old Man's river is dammed up to nearly 100 feet high, and that 100 people were killed. The Premier has notified the Mounted Police and department of interior, and aid is being rushed forward from surrounding districts as speedily as possible. The eruption took place in the mining region.

MINERALOGIST'S OPINION.

W. F. Robertson Doubted That Disturbance Was of a Volcanic Nature.

The first report of an eruption at Frank was combatted by geologists. The geological formations in that part of the country was not regarded by them as of a character for such a disturbance. According to the geological reports the formations are of a comparatively late date. The provincial mineralogist, W. F.

Robertson, when informed of the fact disagreed with the idea of its being volcanic. He believed it would be found to be a slide. Acquainted as he was with the reports descriptive of the formations in that part of the country he said there was no indication of it being a volcanic centre. The rocks were described as cretaceous and carboniferous. While these were contorted somewhat yet they were not broken to any great extent.

Displaying a plan of that section he showed that the rocks though tilted were very regular in their disposition. The regularity of the coal deposits indicated little breaking up of the bodies. All showed that there was a heavy overlying thickness of rock. There was no evidence that this crust was rendered thin in any place by geological disturbances. Another reason against this being volcanic was to his mind found in the fact that there were no premonitory indications of it. This he thought would assuredly have preceded an eruption. There was no report of any disturbance in the way of an earthquake given from the meteorological station, so that he felt sure it was a false rumor.

He was anxious, however, to get all the information as he would leave at once for the country in case of its being volcanic in its character.

NO RECORD LOCALLY

Meteorological Office in City Shows No Trace of a Volcanic Eruption.

The meteorological office in the city discredits the report that the disaster was caused by a volcanic eruption. Their instruments have not recorded any seismic disturbance, which would certainly have been registered had such occurred.

Eruptions and earthquakes in more remote parts of the continent than the scene of the present catastrophe are always recorded at the local office, and the absence of any sign of this occurrence at Frank convinces the meteorological officials that the terrible affair is due to some other cause.

A GEOLOGIST'S VIEWS

He Admits That Nature May Have Upset Scientific Theories.

Geologist McEvoy, of the Crow's Nest Coal Co., is at present at the Driard. He thinks that if a volcanic eruption actually took place it will be the second in the whole history of Canada. The other is recorded in the traditions of the Indians of the Naas river, and corroborated by the lava flow which is apparent there till this day. Mr. McEvoy himself witnessed the evidences of the disturbance, and was so interested that he made exhaustive investigations to see if it had been duplicated in the history of Canada. He found that it was a solitary case.

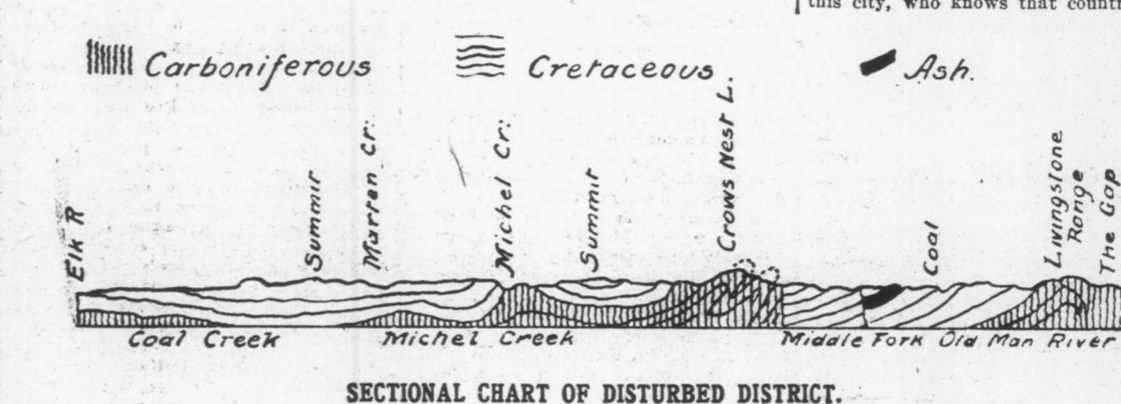
At the same time, he admits that some gigantic upheaval of nature may in this case, as in that on the Naas river, have upset all scientific theories.

Mr. Mott, of Fernie, believes that the slide may have started from an explosion in the tunnels which driving outward started the face of the mountain, which hangs at an angle of about 45 degrees to the valley.

THE TOWN OF FRANK.

A Promising Coal Mining Camp Situated on Crow's Nest Railway Line.

Rowland Machin, agent for the Bennett Fuse Co., who knows the town of Frank well, having transacted business there quite frequently, when seen by a



The above sectional chart taken from Dr. Dawson's report of the region about Crow's Nest gives a clearer idea of the general formation than could be presented by words alone. It shows the general character of the country rock from the Elk River on the west to the Livingstone Range on the east. Frank is situated just west of the Livingstone Range. The sketch shows the regularity of the geological formation. While the general character of the rock overlying the country is cretaceous, yet the carboniferous formation juts through it at various points, making a succession of coal measures available. At one point an ash bed exists. This is described as belonging to the cretaceous period. It, therefore, does not necessarily belong to that region, and in the opinion of the Provincial Mineralogist does not indicate anything of a volcanic nature in that region.

Times representative this morning, said: "Frank is perhaps to-day one of the most promising coal camps in that section of the West. It is named after Mr. Frank, a well-known Butte banker, who is operating extensively in coal mining there. In addition to this a French syndicate, represented by Messrs. Flutot and Gebro, are operating in a gully about eight or ten miles distant. This company at their own expense have constructed a spur connecting their property with the town.

The place is situated on the Crow's Nest line in Alberta, and is about four hours' run from Fernie. It is at the edge of the Rockies, something like fifteen miles east of the summit. The mountains in the vicinity are very bold and precipitous. About a mile and a half east of Frank is Blairmore, which is perhaps one of the most beautiful townships on the Crow's Nest line. With the development of the coal resources there it will eventually connect with Frank, and thus form one continuous town. Frank is well laid out, the coal company having recently erected some very convenient cottages for the miners. The population, I think, will hardly exceed six hundred."

In giving a more definite description of the situation of the camp, Mr. Machin said it was on the Old Man's river, just at the mouth of the canyon, which leads into the Pincher Creek mining country, about twenty-six miles away. Between Frank and Blairmore, about ten minutes' walk, there is a hot spring. "Frank," Mr. Machin added, "is not yet three years old, and of course is merely a mining camp. Its government is in the hands of the coal company, between whom and the miners there are the most

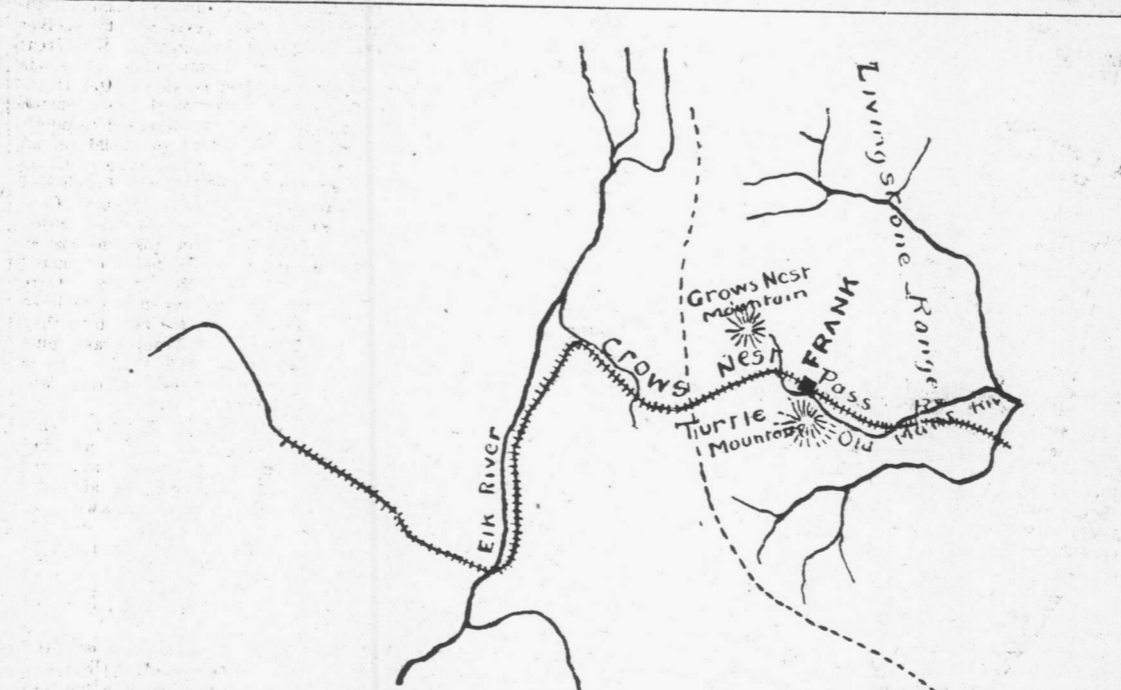
cordial relations. The coal produced is of excellent coking quality. The Frank company have a two years' contract with the C. P. R. The Pincher Creek farming district, where splendid stock and produce are raised, is directly on the east."

D. D. Mott, the well-known sawmill man of Fernie, is in the city, and was intensely interested over the news of the disaster. He could not credit the report that it was due to volcanic eruption, because no such disturbance had ever been felt in that district. The little town of Frank, he states, is situated on the Old Man's river, just below Crow's Nest lake, and lies in the valley at the very entrance of the Crow's Nest Pass, within a short distance of operations of the French-Canadian Coal Co., who own the coal measures there, and whose manager is S. Gebro. The latter gentleman prospected and laid out the mine, which are tapped by two tunnels driven into the face of the mountain. The coal is a fine steam quality, but not quite as good for coking as that obtained in the Crow's Nest Pass. The company find ready sale for it, particularly of late, since the strike at Michel. The C. P. R. have been taking the entire output of about three hundred tons daily. The population of the town is between 700 and 1,000 people. The town itself lies on one side of the river, opposite the tunnels of the coal company, and there has never been any explosion there with the exception of one last fall, in which one man was killed. This was due to gas in the mine, which had to be ventilated, similarly to those of the Crow's Nest Coal Company. The mines have been in operation about a year.

well, having prospected it in early days, says that this intrusion referred to by Dr. Dawson has been traced for a considerable distance. Mr. Fernie, however, has another theory regarding the disaster which will lend itself more favorably to those opposed to the eruptive explanation. There is, he says, an immense fall of snow in those regions. It is probable that a fissure in the rock has been formed by the melting snow, and the consequence has been the displacement of an immense body of rock which has been hurled into the valley below.

J. E. Hobson, vice-president of the Provincial Mining Association, who is a mining engineer of repute, and who all his life has been actively engaged in connection with mineralogy and geology, thinks the trouble is accounted for from a gas explosion. He has seen most remarkable manifestations of the power and destructive influence of gas. He refers to the blowing up of gas from oil wells in which for hundreds of feet a stream of flame has been sent into the air. Machinery weighing tons have been blown to astonishing distances. He feels confident that when all the facts are known it will be found that the disaster was due to gas.

So interested are geologists in the whole story that they are merely awaiting confirmation of the volcanic eruption theory to hurry to the scene and investigate the whole matter in the interests of science. When the Times went to press last night, it announced that its special representative was hurrying to the scene and would be there last night, and promised a comprehensive report of the whole affair for to-day's issue. The Times was scarcely in the hands of its subscribers before the promised dispatch



SKETCH FROM MAP OF CANADIAN GEOLOGICAL SURVEY JUST ISSUED—TURTLE MOUNTAIN AND ENVIRONS.

to-day the Times prints a number of special stories from Frank, some of them from its own representative there, and some from its Fernie representative, who was the first outside newspaper man to get on the ground. Their combined reports give the public a narrative absolutely complete up to date, and unequalled by that of any newspaper on the continent.

Practically wiped out. The town is practically wiped out, as the miners' cottages are destroyed, also the company electric light plant and other buildings. The Leitch family were all killed except their little baby. It is almost impossible to get to Frank as all trains are cancelled. The people are leaving the town.

Top of Turtle Mountain Blown Off—Debris is Two Hundred Feet Deep. So far fifty are reported as being killed in the town from the debris, and twenty are entombed in the mine. The debris is piled up for a distance of a mile and a half, and in some places is two hundred feet deep in places.

The water of the creek is being backed up and is causing a flood. The town is practically wiped out, as the miners' cottages are destroyed, also the company electric light plant and other buildings. The Leitch family were all killed except their little baby. It is almost impossible to get to Frank as all trains are cancelled. The people are leaving the town.

The Frank board of trade have wired the Fernie board of trade as follows: "We suffered from a very large rock slide. There are very few injured; we are not mining and want no help. Please discourage anyone from coming here." (Signed) S. W. Chambers, president Frank board of trade.

It is almost impossible to get to Frank as all trains are cancelled. The people are leaving the town. The Frank board of trade have wired the Fernie board of trade as follows: "We suffered from a very large rock slide. There are very few injured; we are not mining and want no help. Please discourage anyone from coming here." (Signed) S. W. Chambers, president Frank board of trade.

Names of Victims. List of Some of Those Who Perished—Whole Families Were Wiped Out. Frank, Alberta, April 29.—(Special).—About ten minutes past four o'clock this morning this town was shaken with terrific force, and shocked by loud reports and detonations. It seemed that the houses were toppling over in their rocking motion. Instantly the whole town was afoot and soon the shouting and running to and fro of men mingled with the

Walls of the Injured and Dying, together with the pitiful cries of those who had lost loved ones, gave the alarm that a catastrophe of unusual magnitude had taken place. For the time-being nothing was to be seen but a dense cloud of black smoke, with balls of fire darting across the disturbed section. As soon as the first smoke cleared away it was seen that the whole side and top of the mountain immediately at the back of the town had

been blown off and an immense upheaval of about one mile wide by two miles long had taken place, and where before was a long swamp was suddenly transformed into a huge mountain of rock. The direction of the eruption from the mountain was north and northeasterly, and in limestone altogether, as this section of the country is all limestone. The result of the upheaval beggars description, and the side of the mountain on which the mine was working is now nothing but loose falling rock, and all access and access to the tunnel, in which are

Entombed Twenty Miners. is forever cut off, as there is no possible chance of ever getting at the mouth of the tunnel owing to the loose rock, which is continually rolling down. The entombed miners went on shift at three o'clock this morning and exchanged greetings with the men coming off shift, little dreaming of the dreadful fate that so soon was to overtake them. Had the disaster occurred in the daytime instead of at night the loss of life would have been very much greater, as a large force of men are engaged in and about the mouth of the tunnel erecting buildings and a new tippie, and installing an electric light plant, all of which work is of course completely destroyed. Some of the timbers used in construction at the mouth of the tunnel can be seen nearly a mile distant, giving some idea of the terrific force

of the explosion. As to the cause or nature of the explosion, many theories are advanced, some claiming it was gas, others that it was the slacking of the limestone, and still others who claim it is the regular volcanic eruption, but the immense stretch of country torn up by the upheaval would seem to lend color to the idea that there was an upheaval for a mile or so, but no explosion till the top of the mountain was blown off.

The mining company, viz., the Canadian-American Coal & Coke Co., have a number of cottages here in which lived employees and others of the town lived and one whole row of these cottages, together with everybody living in them, was totally destroyed, and it was most remarkable how some other houses, which were directly in line of the rock and timbers, escaped.

The company's mine and plant is totally destroyed and the new electric plant

which was being installed is a mile or more of the C. P. R. up and the rails are twisted into all sorts of fantastic shapes. The press it would be possible that the road could be built up through here again. The rear from the mountain times almost deafening, and panic-stricken for

Fear of Another Outburst. Nearly every cottage in the now vacant, the occupants Blairmore, a small town two tent. Rescue parties have been and a systematized method of rescue is being vigorously carried out. The hope is held out for missing.

The dead so far are as follows: ALEXANDER LEITCH, W. F. POUL, SONS, ALLAN, WILFRID and JACK, ALFRED CLARK, MRS. and CHILDREN, CH. ALBERT, ELLEN, GERT ALBERT, CHAS. ACROFT and WIFE, VANDUSEN and WIFE and CHILDREN, THREE UNIDENTIFIED, JIM GRAHAM and WIFE, JOE and JACK GRAHAM, ALEX. GRAHAM and WIFE, TWO HALF-BREDS JOHNSON, JOHN McVEIGH, JOE RYTON, J. E. SCOTT and a YOUNG employee of McVeigh, FRANK VOCHON, FRANCIS ROCHE, employee stable.

So far fifty are reported as being killed in the town from the debris, and twenty are entombed in the mine. The debris is piled up for a distance of a mile and a half, and in some places is two hundred feet deep in places. The water of the creek is being backed up and is causing a flood. The town is practically wiped out, as the miners' cottages are destroyed, also the company electric light plant and other buildings. The Leitch family were all killed except their little baby. It is almost impossible to get to Frank as all trains are cancelled. The people are leaving the town.

The Frank board of trade have wired the Fernie board of trade as follows: "We suffered from a very large rock slide. There are very few injured; we are not mining and want no help. Please discourage anyone from coming here." (Signed) S. W. Chambers, president Frank board of trade.

Names of Victims. List of Some of Those Who Perished—Whole Families Were Wiped Out. Frank, Alberta, April 29.—(Special).—About ten minutes past four o'clock this morning this town was shaken with terrific force, and shocked by loud reports and detonations. It seemed that the houses were toppling over in their rocking motion. Instantly the whole town was afoot and soon the shouting and running to and fro of men mingled with the

Walls of the Injured and Dying, together with the pitiful cries of those who had lost loved ones, gave the alarm that a catastrophe of unusual magnitude had taken place. For the time-being nothing was to be seen but a dense cloud of black smoke, with balls of fire darting across the disturbed section. As soon as the first smoke cleared away it was seen that the whole side and top of the mountain immediately at the back of the town had

been blown off and an immense upheaval of about one mile wide by two miles long had taken place, and where before was a long swamp was suddenly transformed into a huge mountain of rock. The direction of the eruption from the mountain was north and northeasterly, and in limestone altogether, as this section of the country is all limestone. The result of the upheaval beggars description, and the side of the mountain on which the mine was working is now nothing but loose falling rock, and all access and access to the tunnel, in which are

Entombed Twenty Miners. is forever cut off, as there is no possible chance of ever getting at the mouth of the tunnel owing to the loose rock, which is continually rolling down. The entombed miners went on shift at three o'clock this morning and exchanged greetings with the men coming off shift, little dreaming of the dreadful fate that so soon was to overtake them. Had the disaster occurred in the daytime instead of at night the loss of life would have been very much greater, as a large force of men are engaged in and about the mouth of the tunnel erecting buildings and a new tippie, and installing an electric light plant, all of which work is of course completely destroyed. Some of the timbers used in construction at the mouth of the tunnel can be seen nearly a mile distant, giving some idea of the terrific force

of the explosion. As to the cause or nature of the explosion, many theories are advanced, some claiming it was gas, others that it was the slacking of the limestone, and still others who claim it is the regular volcanic eruption, but the immense stretch of country torn up by the upheaval would seem to lend color to the idea that there was an upheaval for a mile or so, but no explosion till the top of the mountain was blown off.

The mining company, viz., the Canadian-American Coal & Coke Co., have a number of cottages here in which lived employees and others of the town lived and one whole row of these cottages, together with everybody living in them, was totally destroyed, and it was most remarkable how some other houses, which were directly in line of the rock and timbers, escaped.

The company's mine and plant is totally destroyed and the new electric plant