

## REPORT OF PROVINCIAL MINERALOGIST.

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Hon. E. G. Prior,  
Minister of Mines, Victoria, B. C.

*Re* FERNIE EXPLOSION.

SIR,—I beg to hand you herewith my report *re* explosion at the Coal Creek Mines of the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company.

The explosion occurred on May 22nd, 1902, at about 7:25 p.m., and the news of the occurrence reached me, through private sources, at my house (it being a holiday in Victoria) at about 11 a.m. on the 23rd, when I at once telegraphed to Inspector Dick and the Management of the collieries requesting full particulars of the accident, and asking if any assistance was required.

I met you in town about noon, informing you of what had been done, at which time you proposed going up to the mines personally, but informed me later in the evening by 'phone that you could not get away and that I had better go up. I consequently left on the boat that same evening (Friday, May 23rd), arriving in Fernie on Monday evening (May 26), where I at once took a car up to the mines, 5 miles distant from Fernie.

The Coal Creek Mines of the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Co. are situated on Coal Creek, a stream flowing west and cutting across the strike of the coal measures, which are thus sectioned by the valley. The section of such measures is seen on either side of the valley, dipping to the east—that is, up-stream and into the main mountain range.

Workings exist on both sides of the creek, level entry tunnels having been driven in on the seams where they come to the surface, on either hillside, at points nearly opposite each other and about 30 feet above the creek valley, the entrances being connected by an overhead trestle and tippie.

The workings on the *south side* of the creek were all included in the area of the explosion, and are divided in Mines Nos. 2 and 3.

I found, after a brief examination of the mine, that the cause or source of the explosion was not as apparent as might be expected, and noting a good deal of excitement and irritation in the community over the accident, I thought it would be better to have, outside of my departmental report to you, an independent report from some other source. I, therefore, telegraphed you on May 29th, suggesting that the Manager of some Coast colliery be sent up to make such independent report.

On the 30th and 31st you made arrangements with Managers F. H. Shepherd and Alex. Faulds for such examinations and reports. These gentlemen reported to me in Fernie on the evening of June 2nd, bearing your instructions for independent reports from each one of us.

On Tuesday I took these gentlemen up to the mine, and as their conclusions would of necessity be based somewhat upon information given them by those who were on the relief parties, I thought it best that such information should not be derived solely from the officers of the Company. After due consideration, I decided to select two of the miners who were most actively engaged in the rescue work to accompany and be with the investigators in all their explorations. I selected, accordingly, Thomas Addison and A. D. Ferguson, both experienced miners with over 20 years' experience in Nova Scotia coal mines, being guided in such choice by the fact that at a recent election by ballot held to appoint representatives of the miners on the Board of Examiners for coal miners' Certificates of Competency, in which election those killed had also voted, these two men headed the polls and had also been two out of the four men selected in the month of May to examine the mine as a committee chosen by the men under General Rule 31, section 82, of the Act. These two miners accompanied Messrs. Shepherd and Faulds everywhere throughout their investigations and concurred in all information given, or so they stated on the spot.