RESCUE ORGANIZATIONS

The life savers of the United States Bureau of Mines have, according to the statement of Dr. Joseph A. Holmes, the director, rescued more than one hundred entombed miners from certain death. More than this, he asserts in his annual report that volunteer rescuers in the employ of mining companies and trained in rescue work by the bureau have saved many other men. As a result of the example set by the bureau, rescue and first-aid organizations have been established at many mines and more than 1,200 sets of rescue apparatus have been purchased by mine owners. These stations are expected to save the lives of many men in the future.

The bureau in the furtherance of its work now maintains six mine rescue stations, eight mine rescue cars, and one rescue motor truck, located in the mining districts of the country. The cars visit the various mining camps and train the men in rescue work and also in first aid to the injured. This movement has reached the point that whenever there is a mine disaster it is now possible to obtain a sufficient number of trained volunteers to take care of the rescue in an orderly and systematic manner and without the great loss of life so frequently found among the rescuers in the past.

Director Holmes declares that there should be fifteen rescue cars, instead of eight, to take care of the needs of the million miners in the United States. "The work of the States in carrying out their part of this program in mine safety is being carried forward in a reasonably satisfactory manner," says Dr. Holmes. "The States are already spending in their inspection and police supervision work more than the Federal Government is spending in all of its investigations in behalf of mine safety. Thus, for example, a single State, Pennsylvania, maintains a well-organized and efficient inspection force at a cost of $213,000 each year.

"Many of the mine owners have begun a system of operations in which safety is considered of first importance. More than 170 mining companies have individually, or through the association of two or more companies, established seventy-six mine-rescue stations at which there are 1,200 sets of rescue apparatus besides the auxiliary equipment for first aid and fire-fighting work. There are also twelve mine-rescue cars now operating by individual companies about their own properties.

"In the relatively short period during which the crews of the bureau's rescue cars and stations were able to conduct active training of miners, 46,694 miners have visited the cars and stations, 26,229 attended lectures and safety demonstrations, 2,826 were given mine-rescue training, and 5,780 first-aid instruction and rescue training."

USE OF RESCUE APPARATUS

Our British Columbia correspondent informs us that there seems to be good reason to think that omission to strictly observe the prescribed regulations or instructions relative to procedure when using oxygen-breathing apparatus underground indirectly if not directly, led to the lamentable loss of the life of the late District Mine Inspector Evans in one of the coal mines in Crowsnest district of British Columbia. It is stated that the rules provide in effect that no oxygen-breathing apparatus shall be removed from its proper place on the person wearing it while the wearer is in a gaseous atmosphere in a mine; that all members of a party wearing such apparatus shall while underground keep within touch of one another; and that when any rescue or exploring party wearing such apparatus shall have entered a mine, a second or emergency party, fully equipped, shall be at hand prepared to enter the mine immediately there shall be found necessity for it to proceed to the relief of those already in the mine on rescue or exploratory work under conditions involving danger. The wording of the rules is not used above, but the substance of them has been stated. At Coal Creek one man improperly removed his mouth breathing apparatus so as to speak to other members, who had gone ahead and out of touch of each other, and he immediately succumbed to the effect of the poisonous gases; then the late mine inspector and the colliery manager in their efforts to assist their companion in his distress, he being a big and very heavy man, over-exerted themselves. Mr. Evans, who was wearing a Draeger helmet, either knocked it out of its proper position when he fell exhausted, or in his struggles to get air dragged it out of place, so that he breathed the poisoned atmosphere of the mine in which several hours before an explosion had taken place, putting the ventilating fan out of operation: finally, on one member of the party, also in distress, managing to make his way to the mine entrance there was not a relief party ready to give the needed assistance at a critical time. The trouble began probably in less than a quarter of an hour from the time the first party entered the mine and, it is stated, within about 150 ft. from fresh air. Further the man in charge of the Government mine-rescue station had been told that his services would not be required since it was not intended to send men into the mine, so he went back to his station, but afterward it was decided to investigate whether or not there was fire in the mine. It was not supposed there was even one man in the mine, so there was little urgency for an examination before the fan could be restored to running order. So it came about that a valuable life was lost when there was really no need to incur risk, and certainly no justification for neglect to follow carefully the prescribed regulations or instructions in such an emergency. Our correspondent makes these statements with the object of showing that there is no good reason to suppose that the oxygen-breathing apparatus was faulty, or unsafe had it been used properly; also, in the hope that this second fatality (the other was the loss of life of a member of a rescue party at Bellevue, Alberta, several years ago, also through improper removal of the oxygen-breathing apparatus) will impress upon those who go underground in a poisoned atmosphere that they must rigidly adhere to the prescribed rules, if possible, or fatal results may be expected to follow their not doing so.

HOLLINGER DIVIDEND INCREASED.

Directors of Hollinger Gold Mines, Ltd., at a meeting in Toronto, Jan. 15, placed the stock on an annual dividend basis of 52 per cent. Hollinger has been paying 3 per cent. each 28-day period, or 39 per cent. per annum. Beginning with the 30th dividend, payable Jan. 28, the rate will be 4 per cent. every four weeks. Payment of the dividend due Jan. 28 will bring total distribution on the stock up to $2.730.000. The additional 1 per cent. every four weeks will require $120.000, or $1,560.000 annually.

Hollinger's statement for the four weeks ended Jan. 2 showed a surplus of $1.236.304. It is expected that the new dividend rate will be easily maintained.