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The Edmonton Bulletin.

VOL. V.

EDMONTON BULLETIN, MONDAY, JUNE 10, 1907.

NUMBER 32.

SIX MEN DEAD AS RESULT OF MINING DISASTER AT STRATHCONA

Five Miners Trapped by Fire at Mouth of Walter's Mine—Geo. H. Lamb, Mine Foreman Gave up His Life in Futile Attempt to Save His Fellows—Fire Started in Engine Room—Men Might Have Saved Themselves—Remains Burned Almost Beyond Recognition.

THE DEAD MEN.

George H. Lamb, foreman, age 31, Newcastle, England.
 George Hardy, night boss, aged 47, Newcastle, England.
 Wm. McLellan, waterman, aged 28, Darham, Eng.
 Percy Harrington, waterman, aged 25, Essex, England.
 J. T. Tetley, coal digger, aged 32, Barrow in Furness, Eng.
 Francis Thepot, coal digger, aged 28, Brittany, South of France.

stretcher, covered with blankets, and carried up the hill to the home of W. H. Suggs. The body was placed upon the stretcher and physicians hastily summoned. Despite the terrible agony that was the result of his body being burned almost to a crisp, he patiently endured the fearful pain. After the burns had been dressed as well as could be, he was removed to the Strathcona hospital, where he passed away yesterday afternoon at three o'clock.

IN MEMORIAM.

In memory of George H. Lamb, late of Newcastle, Eng., who heroically gave up his life in endeavoring to rescue his friend and four other miners imprisoned in Walter's mine on June 8th, 1907. Greater love hath no man than this that he gave up his life for his friends.

The worst tragedy in the history of Northern Alberta occurred at Strathcona shortly before midnight on Saturday, and while thousands of Edmonton citizens were sleeping peacefully in their homes the lives of five unfortunate men were wiped out in a short distance from the Capital on the south side of the Saskatchewan River.

Today six bodies, four of which are burned beyond recognition, lie in the morgue at Strathcona as the result of a mine horror in the southern city, the sad details of which are unequalled in the annals of the west.

The work of exploring the mine for the men below was begun as soon as the fire and heat would allow, between twelve and one o'clock. The first to attempt the descent down the cage shaft was fireman William Carruthers, of the city electric light department. The smoke was too much to bear, however, and he was hauled up by the rope which had been tied around his body.

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When the alarm was given, the fire was first noticed by the day engineer, Ed. Candler, who lives in a shack close by the mine mouth. He tells the following story:

"About eleven o'clock I was aroused by my wife, who heard a noise which I at first thought was a train crossing the bridge. I looked out of the window and saw the fire, which even then had made considerable headway. I ran up the hill, a short distance to the west, to the house where Foreman Lamb lived. I told him the fire, and he immediately called in his flocking feet he rushed to the office of the mine and rang in the alarm. Then he ran to the shaft and descended, after which he did not see him again till he emerged while the previous attempts were being made, offered to go to the bottom, saying he could find a way in the adjoining shaft."

The largest of the buildings is the engine house, which is situated to the south of the main shaft and nearer the hill. This shaft is divided into two parts by a partition in the middle, each part is about four feet square. One section is used for the cage which brings up the coal, and the other is for the descent of the men. Over this shaft is a large treble work of timber, about fifty feet high and sixty feet long, on the top of which the cars of coal and refuse from the mine were loaded and run some distance away to be dumped. About twenty-five feet to the east of this main shaft is the air shaft, at the top of which a fan was worked by a smaller engine during the day for ventilation purposes. This was also enclosed by a small house, 8 x 12 feet. It was at this point that the fire started.

Members of Lodge Edmonton, Sons of England, and other Englishmen wishing to attend the funeral of the five fellow-countrymen who lost their lives at the mine fatality at Strathcona Saturday night, are requested to meet at Potter & McDougall's, corner of Jasper, at 10 a.m. Tuesday, if they wish to be present.

The mutilated remains of the five men who were killed in the disaster at the mine were found in the engine room, which was the only body in which there was any hope of rescue. At the mine mouth the physicians worked hard, but it was soon seen that life was extinct.

Then followed the sad work of raising the other bodies to the surface. One by one they were brought up and their awful condition was almost too much for the strongest nerves.

The Mutilated Remains.

To the bottom of the shaft the burning timber had fallen and almost maiming of McLellan and Tetley completely covered the bodies. There were only the trunks, both heads and

legs being completely gone, and the only method of identification was the measuring of the trunks. An arm was burned off Thepot, and the heads of both he and Harrington were partly burned off. Their bodies were also very badly disfigured. Hardy was not disfigured except for a slight bruise on his forehead, his death apparently having been caused by suffocation. Lamb, who died yesterday afternoon, and whose remains were removed to the morgue this morning, is also terribly burned about the head and all over the body. From the first there was no hope of his recovery, and though he himself thought he would pull through the physicians realized from the time of the accident that his death was a matter of a day or two only.

A Dying Statement.

Before Lamb died yesterday afternoon he told in partly incoherent sentences his share in the tragedy. He said that he had been alarmed by the engine, and running to the office he telephoned that the mill was on fire. Then he thought of his men below, and he tried to get down the shaft where they usually descend, adjoining the cage. The first time he went thirty feet and the smoke drove him back, the second time he got down sixty feet, but had to return for air, and at the time of the third effort the entire woodwork took fire. He was unable to make the bottom at this shaft, so he ran to the air shaft, where the flames had not yet reached. Here he managed to reach the bottom and shouted to the men. He told one to go up before him, and the man started but fell back. Then he took the lead himself and can remember nothing more except that he got to the surface and adjuring the others to follow were knocked off the ladder with the falling timber or that the leading man made arrangements to remove shortly to another province. Maybe it was this exhibition of friendship by Hardy that led Lamb to sacrifice his life for his friend.

employed at the mine for over a year. He was first night foreman, and on May 1st succeeded Dunn, becoming day foreman. He was a native of Newcastle-on-Tyne, England, but has a sister in Lloydminster. He has a homestead in Marshall, Sask., and was engaged to be married shortly to a young lady of Lloydminster.

George Hardy was the only married man of the dead. He leaves a wife and two small children, one 2 1/2 and one 7 years old, in Newcastle. His wife was making arrangements to remove to this country in about a month's time. He was an experienced mining expert of over twenty years' service, and had worked in Tasmania and New Zealand. His position was only a temporary one, as he intended shortly removing to Nanaimo, B. C., where he had an excellent offer from leading mineowner, Ralph Smith, M.P., of that city, having been instrumental in inducing him to determine to remove to the Coast. For him and his two little boys Western Canada held out bright prospects of success.

Pathetic Stories of the Dead.

There is a touching side to the relationship between Lamb, the mine foreman, and his subordinate Hardy, the night boss. The men were friends in the Old Country, and when Hardy came here, with superior mining knowledge and experience, there were suggestions of his replacing Lamb. But the older man was true to his friend, and would do nothing that might injure him in his position. He accepted a subordinate work, and made arrangements to remove shortly to another province. Maybe it was this exhibition of friendship by Hardy that led Lamb to sacrifice his life for his friend.

Might All Have Escaped.

It is probable if the men had all retired safely to the far end of the mine passage about 250 or 275 feet away from the engine house, that they would have come out alive. In this part of the mine a candle was burning when the rescuing party reached it and the smoke was not unbearable. But under the conditions at the time of the fire it would be very natural that the first thought would be to reach the surface. It was too late, even though a candle was lit, to be of any use.

The Origin of the Fire.

The origin of the fire is at present veiled in some doubt, as there was no watchman or other person at the surface of the mine, where it started. Whether the fire started in the engine house about 9.30, the night boss, Hardy, and McLellan were engaged in the usual way, being held in position the usual way, by the cage. A candle was burning and ignited the wood, as had happened on a previous occasion. Such was the nature of the place would soon be in flames. A few feet away from the shaft were three casks of oil, one for the engine, one for the cylinder and one for the use of the miners. When the fire reached these it would be impossible to stay its progress. It did not take long to spread to the timber of the trestle work a few feet further away, and the small house over the air shaft was also soon ignited. In a very few minutes after the alarm all three structures were burning fiercely, and even if the city water were available at once it is doubtful if it would have been effective.

THE COMMISSION IS AT COLEMAN

At This Point, Mines Have Been Working Irregularly Owing to Car Shortage.

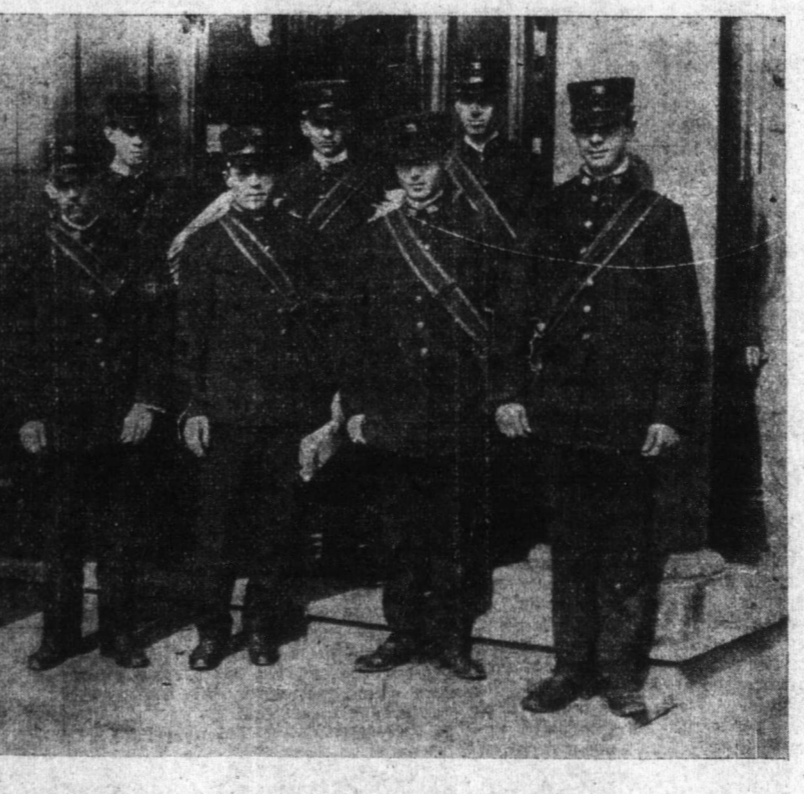
Bulletin Special.
 Coleman, June 10.—The coal commission is sitting here today. This morning miners employed by the International Coal and Coke company were heard and this afternoon the operators will give evidence. Tomorrow Mine Inspector Heathcote and International Board Member Patterson will be examined. It is expected that the commission will sit at Banff on Thursday.

The evidence this morning showed the mines here, which are the most extensive in Alberta, have been working irregularly owing to the car shortage and the strike in April. The mine operates under an eight-hour bank to bank day. Wages are paid once a month and one of the witnesses said a weekly pay would be looked upon by most miners as good as a five per cent. increase in wages. It was suggested that the mine inspector should not notify the officials when he was going to visit a mine as he would then be better able to ascertain the actual conditions. The ventilation of the mine was admitted by the miners to be good. The usual suggestions for a compensation for the examination of miners, etc., were offered.

Novelist Dead.

Richmond, Va., June 9.—Miss Julia Macgruder, the novelist, died here today after a protracted illness. She was 51 years old. She was a native of Charlottesville, Va., and her home was in Washington, D.C. Most of her stories were written since 1880.

EDMONTON'S LETTER CARRIERS.



Top Row—J. Cass, R. M. Lamberston, H. Livingston.
 Bottom Row—W. E. Berry, W. J. Venner, Geo. Birch, A. M. Forrest, A. E. May, Postmaster.