

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

BUREAU OF MINES
WASHINGTON, D.C.

BUREAU OF MINES CO-OPERATIVE CLINIC

PICHER, OKLAHOMA

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March 4, 1931.

Dr. R. R. Sayers,
Chief Surgeon,
Bureau of Mines,
Washington, D. C.

SUBJECT: Informal monthly letter.

Dear Doctor Sayers:

There were 347 men examined during the month, divided as follows: Original (first annual) men, 74, women, 17; re-examinations, men, 252, women, 4. Examinations this month were somewhat less than they were last month, but hold about the monthly average for the year. I expect and hope that the examinations will be lighter for the remainder of the year in order to enable me to do some work on the reports for the fiscal year 1929. With the large number of men coming in, as has been the case for the past two months, I have had to do a considerable amount of examining.

Conditions in the field at the present time are rather chaotic. On the 20th of the month the Commerce Mining and Royalty Company was notified that the Eagle Picher was unable to raise the funds for the purchase of that company. This was a disappointment to most everybody, and I am certain it was to the two companies themselves. The result was that the Commerce Company immediately closed down four properties (half their mines operating), the Eagle Picher closed two out of the five that they were operating, laid off a large number of office men, cut the salaries of office men 10 per cent, and those of men working in the mines 50 cents a day. The Commerce Mining and Royalty Company also made a 10 per cent cut. The closing of these mines has thrown a large number of men out of work and the cut in wages is pretty hard on those employed, as the wages were already low. However, these two companies are paying more wages than the others already in the field. Of course this has had a very depressing effect upon the other mine operators and there has been a general tendency to close down the mines or lay off men and cut wages in an attempt to economize in many ways. This has affected the economical life of the entire community to such extent that I believe that the conditions are worse at the present moment than they have been throughout the depression.

RRS

The political situation is also giving some of the operators some concern. There is a definite move on to increase taxes on corporations, gross income, salaries, mortgages, bonds, corporation licenses, and many other phases of taxation that would materially increase the cost to corporations, in an attempt to adjust and lighten the taxes on the farmer. the Governor having promised the farmers that he would reduce the ad valorem taxes 50 per cent by July 1. In addition, there is a bill in the legislature to force state insurance and very likely in Kansas if not in Oklahoma, certain occupational diseases will be made compensable. This in Oklahoma is said to be meeting considerable opposition and may be delayed at least until the extra session. As a result of the agitation there has been circulated a petition requesting that the Governor have the Clinic investigated. This petition is being circulated at the present time and I have reported it to Mr. Harbaugh and through this end to Mr. Thompson. Of the efforts they will make to offset this work by the men out of employment I do not know; probably none until the petition has reached the Governor's hands. It is my information that the petition does not criticize the Clinic so much as it does the compensation laws that increase the compensation risk and cause the giving of low grades for disability on account of one eye, one arm, one leg, etc., losses.

Mr. Cummings left on the 26th. His work here was interesting to us and I believe that he arrived at the conclusion that we did several years ago; namely, that the families of the silico-tuberculars apparently do not contract tuberculosis. Out of the 60 families in which the men were bedridden with silicosis or tuberculosis 27 had open tubercular lesions. Two hundred women and children were examined. Of this number, only one had any evidence of active tuberculosis. A number had calcified glands in and around the hilum, but no higher percentage that would be expected in non-tubercular families.

I believe this is about the news for the month.

Yours respectfully,

F. V. Meriwether
F. V. Meriwether,
Surgeon in Charge.

CC - Dr. Lanza.