General Chairman Thomas E. Lightfoot, Koppers Coal Company, Pittsburgh, Pa., who presided. Chairman Lightfoot then introduced the first speaker.

Gen. paper - 1317 - Mining

Report of the Secretary

By DANIEL HARRINGTON

United States Bureau of Mines, Washington, D. C.

The speaker said in part: For the first eight months of the present year the mines of the United States have had the longest consecutive freedom from major explosion disasters in the past 50 or more years. Seven persons were killed and one injured in an explosion in a bituminous coal mine in Pennsylvania on the morning of September 11, 1933, this being the first major explosion in any mine, coal or metal, in the United States since December 23, 1932. There is no record of any continuing period of immunity from major disasters in our mines even approximately this in length.

The first eight months of 1933 show a lower fatality rate in the coal mines of the United States than for the same period of 1932 or for the full year 1932. But 627 persons were killed in the coal mines of the country to September 1, 1933, in the production of slightly less than 240,000,000 tons of coal, the fatality per million tons being only 2.62; for the first eight months of 1932, there were 684 killed in the production of about 216,000,000 tons of coal, with a fatality rate of 3.17 per million tons produced. It is noticeable that there were fifty-seven fewer deaths in the first eight months of 1933 than in the first eight months of 1932 and there was an increase of about 24,000,000 tons in the 1933 period.

Tentative figures available as to coal mine fatalities in 1932, placed the total at 1,166 against 1,463 in 1931. West Virginia had the largest number of fatalities, 263, a decided improvement over the 351 for 1931. Pennsylvania anthracite came second with 245 fatalities, also a much better showing than the 383 of the previous year. Pennsylvania bituminous was third with 158 or considerably fewer than the 210 in 1931. Fourth place went to Illinois with 114, an increase over the 92 of 1931, and fifth place to Kentucky with 101, a slight decrease from the 110 of the previous year.

The health and safety of the approximately 1,000,000 persons in the United States engaged in the mining and quarrying industries unquestionably are improving during recent years in spite of the numerous unsatisfactory conditions now confronting those industries.

Gen. paper M 6652

Safety

By CHARLES E. BOCKUS

President, Clinchfield Coal Corp., and President, National Coal Assn., New York City

The speaker said in part: At a time when the selling price of a product is less than cost, when red figures show up month after month, and that has been the unfortunate history of a great majority of the coal producers for the past three years, it is not hard to curtail the amounts paid for safety work. I say it with real pride, however, that in many of the companies this temptation has been resisted. Nor should we forget that in periods like the recent past when mines are operated only one or two days in the week, the most careful inspection is of the highest importance, both as regards top conditions and ventilation. Increase in mechanization has helped reduce certain classes of accidents. The working of men in groups under direct supervision is undoubtedly the reason for this. On the other side of the picture, you will find experienced miners who state that the amount of noise from conveyors or loaders is a handicap. Mechanization should be coupled with intensive inspection of the top at all times.

How much do coal mine accidents cost?

First, the actual cost to the operating company in payments made under Employers' Liability or Compensation Laws or in damage to property. That item is put first, not because it is either the largest or the most important, but merely because it is the easiest to measure with the yardstick of business—dollars and cents.

Second, the loss of wages directly due to the enforced idleness of those who have been injured. That can be determined with relative accuracy by those employees who keep careful records and follow up their accident cases to the end. But even in those circumstances there has to be some estimating, for a man, after a severe injury, may have to return to employment in some position not compensated for so well as was the place he held before. This, measured in "cash loss" is the largest item of the four.

Third, the loss, and it is a serious one, that comes from the shattering of the morale of any organization where there are frequent injuries to the workers, and the effect is particularly marked after a fatality.

Fourth, the loss of effectiveness of any worker who has suffered a serious accident. A man who has passed his youth may be discharged from the hospital as recovered completely from damage done; but it is only in exceptional cases that he can ever be really restored to the physical and mental condition he enjoyed before his injury. I know of no way the losses under the last two headings can be even approximated, but they are actual and material.

Last year accidents cost our company directly more than did the salaries of all our mine foremen and their assistants; more than the total expense under either of the items, hoisting and loading, or ventilation and drainage. Please do not misunderstand me; by cost I mean what was paid out in 1932 irrespective of the year in which the accident occurred. But our cost of accidents that happened in 1932 was of itself more than the charges for ventilation and drainage. What it cost our employees under my divisions, two, three, and four, is a question. I am sure of this: Under all the headings I have mentioned, the burden was far more than double the direct expense to the employer.

Greetings from South Africa

By J. W. STRAW

Safety Inspector, Roan Antelope Copper Mines, Ltd., Luanshya, Northern Rhodesia, Africa

Mr. Straw made a short extemporaneous talk without manuscript, and unfortunately no adequate record of his remarks is available. In many respects his talk was a personal one. He commended the work of the National Safety Council and emphasized the profit which his company has received from material and service rendered by that organization. Suggestions by the Council have been widely used in the organization of accident prevention campaigns on the properties of the Roan Antelope Copper Mines, and have been very instrumental in keeping down the accident toll.