

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

BUREAU OF MINES CO-OPERATIVE CLINIC

PICHER, OKLAHOMA

December 4, 1930.

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

SUBJECT: Informal monthly letter.

Dear Dr. Sayers:

We made during the month of November 334 examinations, divided as follows: Original (first annual), men 44, women 10; re-examinations, (second or third annual), men 277, women 3. We are running about the same number of examinations each month, which is far below what we made last year, largely due I believe to the men's having to have an order for an examination, as last year's tabulations show that approximately half of the men were not employed. The number of men employed in the field remains about the same as it was last month (5200), but apparently there is more evidence of unemployment in the field than there was before the cold weather, probably due to the fact that a large number of men are returning from the harvest fields.

The negotiations between the Eagle Picher and Commerce Mining and Royalty companies for the purchase of the latter company by the former are continuing and it is common gossip that the sale has been completed. Yesterday auditors came into the field and were checking the Commerce properties for the Eagle Picher. Furthermore, it was part of the original plan of sale that the Eagle Picher was to take over the electric plant of the Commerce Mining and Royalty Company, and the Northeast Oklahoma Railroad Company, these two properties to be sold to other concerns. It was officially announced through the Missouri Pacific that they had purchased the Northeast Oklahoma Railroad for a million and a half dollars, subject to the Interstate Commerce Commission's approval, but the papers further stated that approval would be undoubtedly obtained inasmuch as the railway commission appointed for allocation of railroads had placed this line in the Missouri Pacific system and that the purchase was in accordance with plans formulated by this commission. It was further stated on good authority, but has not yet been officially announced that the Empire District Electric Company (Daugherty Interests) purchased the electric plant from the Commerce Mining for the sum of two million dollars. This leaves the mines, which were to be sold to the Eagle Picher and the two subsidiaries which the Eagle Picher wishes to farm out to the companies have been sold and it looks very much as if the deal was through. It is generally rumored that the Eagle Picher will take charge January 18.

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The consummation of this deal has brought in various rumors in regards to other companies on which the Eagle Picher has options and others on which they have not options. So far as rumors go, they have bought controlling interests in the Canaan Metals Company, the Crystal Mineral Trust Company, the Foche Mining Company, and some smaller companies. They are said to have an option on the King Brand Cortez, the Golden Rod and the Rialto, and there is some talk of them obtaining the Admiralty, Howe, Demado and several other small properties that are not now operating. The outlook for the district is that by spring the Eagle Picher will control directly or indirectly everything in the field except the Interstate, St. Louis, and Vinegar Hill Bar. The Federal and the Eagle Picher already have some working alliance through, as I understand, an interlocking directorate whereby a working understanding occurs. This large consolidation in the field in my opinion will be bad for the City of Miami for a time, but probably in the long run will be beneficial.

On our work I am inclined to believe it is going to make it very much easier in securing appropriations for next year and in obtaining sufficient funds for the operators to take over the venereal section at the end of this year and ultimately to obtain the consent of this company to operate the clinic after the Government has released it. Mr. Campbell, the adjuster and legal advisor for the compensation department of the Eagle Picher originally was not sold on the idea of the clinic, but during the last year he has compiled compensation on the men physically examined by the clinic by classes over a period of two years and eighteen months. These figures show that for each lost-time accident of B class men the cost was \$85, while the lower classes show a rapid rise to something over \$300 per accident. He has promised me the tabulations and I will send them to you as soon as I obtain them, as they are extremely interesting information. As a result of this work he is thoroughly sold on the clinic and states that if the company would work only B class men and it cost \$26 a ton to mine the ore and it sold for \$26, and mined with the present force; that by the employment of B class men only they could make a profit. He has worked out a rustling card system to become effective on the transfer of the Commerce company to them and the installation of a personnel system in his office that will give him very much closer checking facilities on the physical condition of their men than they have had in the past. He expects to go very much deeper in the question of physical examinations and to enforce the placing of men where they will be of the least hazard from a compensation point of view in the company. He has a number of positions worked out where one-armed, one-eyed, and men with such physical handicaps can work without being a compensation liability and is going to limit the employment of such men to these positions. His plan as arranged appears to be practical and economically sound and I hope to see them put it in operation on completion of the transfer.

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As a result of the recent elections and the meeting of the legislatures of both Kansas and Oklahoma there is much agitation in reference to changes in compensation laws in both states. They have been holding meetings both for the operators and the workmen in Kansas during the past week and a very lengthy questionnaire has been sent out to the employees with suggested changes in compensation laws. The operators in this district feel that all such changes are a camouflage and smoke screen for the one item mentioned at the bottom; namely, the making of industrial diseases compensable. The district has had lawyers in Topeka practically all week registering protests against such changes, but most of the thinking officials appear to believe the chances of warding off compensation for industrial diseases in both of the states is very doubtful. They may succeed in preventing the passage in one of them, but it is freely predicted that Oklahoma will pass an industrial disease law and a State Insurance law, both of which it appears that the Governor elect is in favor of, although he has not yet definitely committed himself. Most of the operators I have talked to recently feel that the clinic work in the district has been a life-saver to the industry and so far as I have heard there is no indication of any further trouble in securing adequate appropriations to run it. I am inclined to believe that if this law is passed in either state that we will have no trouble in passing the clinic over to them.

The vault storage space for films has become so crowded until some of the films are deteriorating. During the month I made arrangements with the Bank of Hockerville to secure its vault for the next six months for the use of the clinic and will transfer all films over two years old to that vault. This will save the construction of a vault during this depression and at the same time their vault is close enough so that if it is necessary to have one of these pictures it can be obtained in a few minutes. It is the opinion of Mr. Chambers, president of the Bank, that if the depression is not over at the end of six months that we could probably have this vault for another six months or until we are in a position to construct a vault.

I believe this is about the news for the month.

Yours respectfully,

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

CC - Dr. Lanza.