

court will not assume that the Council acted arbitrarily or from any improper motive without some evidence to that effect.

The writ of mandamus is denied.

Concurred in by Blackburn, J.; Anderson, J.

Miner, J., reserves the right to hand down separate opinion.

### TERRIFIC MINE EXPLOSION.

SCOTSDALE, Pa., Jan. 27.—By an explosion of firedamp in the Mammoth shaft of the H. C. Fricke Coke Company today, eighty sturdy miners were ushered into eternity and a number seriously injured. The explosion occurred this morning shortly after 9 o'clock, and it is supposed was the result of the ignition of a miner's oil lamp. The after damp which followed the fire damp explosion suffocated nearly every workman. The few men who realized the awful situation fell to the ground, thereby preventing the gas striking them. The persons not killed are in such a critical condition that their deaths are momentarily expected.

Up to this writing fifty bodies are recovered, all without a sign of life. A fire which broke out after the explosion was soon extinguished. By an immense fan which was put in operation the gas has about all been driven from the pit, and the work of rescuing the entombed miners has commenced.

The Mammoth plant embraces 500 ovens, one of the largest plants in the coke region, but it is hard of access. It is situated near the United works, where an explosion recently destroyed an entire shaft.

The affair has cast a gloom over the entire coke region, and tonight hundreds of miners are flocking to

#### THE SCENE OF DISASTER

offering assistance. The appalling loss of life in the Dunbar disaster is more than overshadowed by the destruction of life in the Mammoth calamity. The news spread throughout the entire coke region with great rapidity, and every body is awe-stricken. Coffins have already been ordered for eighty persons from Mount Pleasant undertakers.

No one escaped from the mine in a condition to tell the story of the awful disaster. It is estimated that there are fifty wives and families left wholly dependent on the charity of the world for sustenance by this disaster. In fact, they are almost penniless. As the plant has not been running full for some time, and work has been exceedingly scarce, everything possible will be resorted to to supply the widows, mothers and children with the necessities of life. The Fricke Company will act liberally in this direction, and Master Workman Porter has sent an appeal for aid to the miners and cokers of this region.

#### AT MIDNIGHT

It is stated 110 men were killed in the explosion. Sixty bodies have been taken out so far. The mine is again on fire and it is feared all the other bodies will be cremated.

A partial story of the disaster is obtained. An unexpected flow of gas was struck and the miners working in the headings connected with the flats 2, 3 and 4, were all killed. The fire

boss, as is his duty, had been in the mine and examined the working places. His mangled body lies at the morgue. The only evidence that he attended to his duties, are the regular certificates of inspection received from him this morning, which guaranteed the mines safe. The miners knew these certificates had been fled out and went to work. They never returned.

Superintendent Keighly, who was mine inspector in the Dunbar district when that horror occurred, was at the mine when the explosion took place. He immediately called for volunteers, and, gathering a few about him, descended the shaft. Before doing so he notified General Superintendent Lynch and that gentleman ordered all the mine superintendents in the region to the scene.

When the volunteers entered the mine a sight impossible to picture met them. A bank of cars, mules and, more terrible than all, men, were

#### PACKED IN A COMPACT MASS

against the ribs or walls of coal, and not a living thing was in the wreckage. It was almost as solid as the coal itself, so terrific was the force of the explosion. This obstruction was removed with difficulty and they entered the chamber of horrors. The first object they discovered after leaving the main entry was a gum boot. In it was the leg of a man. Further on they found a human head, but nowhere in sight was the trunk that had borne it, but in a few minutes, after walking a distance surrounded by dangers unseen, they found the trunk. The ragged neck, with blood oozing from it, told the story of an appalling disaster.

Working their way in, they found bodies strewn along the gangway. One unfortunate met death while on his knees in prayer, with hands clasped and eyes uplifted. His body was found in this position. It was a pathetic picture.

While all this was occurring the people of the region were concentrated at the scene of the great disaster. Women, children, relatives and friends of the unfortunate victims rushed to the mouth of the pit shrieking and sobbing, and the scene was one

#### NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN.

Following them came the physicians and undertakers from Scottdale, Mount Pleasant and Greensburgh, and after them Father Lambing of Scottdale, who went among the bereaved with words of sympathy and condolence, besides urging the men to greater work to rescue any who might be alive and imprisoned. The services of the physicians were little needed, for every man in the headings where the explosion occurred was killed. None were injured, and dead bodies were brought up every few minutes. Every corpse was covered, and no one even ventured to inquire which body it was, for they knew that every one in that part of the mine at the time of the explosion was dead.

Superintendent Keighly was sorely distressed. He had been in two other mine disasters, at Dunbar and Youngstown, but this was far worse. He said: "No man living knows the cause of the accident, and it will never be known for a certainty. Not so many

were killed by the explosion, but the after damp came and the unfortunates succumbed to it. This is shown by the fact that only those bodies in the immediate vicinity of the worst wreckage were mutilated."

One foreman connected with the mine said that

#### SAFETY LAMPS

were not used in it. The presence of the gas was not suspected.

John M. Bell, fire boss at Hecla No. 1, said: "About two years ago there was an explosion of gas at the mine and one man was burned to death. No safety lamps were used here. There was too much work here for one fire boss. They discharged one a couple of weeks ago to reduce expenses, and one man has been forced to do the work. I managed to secure the last report of the mine inspector, and it is a very important document just now. The latest examination of the mine by the State Inspector was made on January 16th. It shows at the inlet, which is about a mile or more away from the shaft, that there were 55,680 cubic feet of air entering. The general condition of the mine was marked.

YOUNGWOOD, Pa., Jan. 28.—One hundred and seven bodies had been taken from the ill-fated mine of Frick and Company at Mammoth up to 10 o'clock this morning. It is estimated that the remains are at least seventeen more. The victims of yesterday's explosion are still in the pit, but it is thought all will be out in a few hours. Nobody slept at Mammoth last night. In every home in the little mining hamlet was mourning. Little one-story houses, scantily furnished, were illuminated with a tallow candle, and mother, wife, sister or sweetheart sobbed in silence. After the explosion yesterday, the news of the awful fate of scores of miners at work in the shaft spread rapidly among the mines, and miners' homes. Couriers carried the dreadful news hither and thither. The families rushed from the comforts of home into the depths of grief and despair. The scenes at these miners' cottages can readily be imagined. Within incredibly short time the entrance to the shaft swarmed with an eager, anxious crowd, men, women, children, some of whom could only with great difficulty be kept at a safe distance. As the bodies of the victims, mangled by the terrible force of the explosion or burned almost out of human semblance, were brought up from the yawning depths, the crowd of watchers pushed forward to the pit's mouth for a glimpse of recognition. Hearts of wives and mothers stood still in fear of finding their loved ones among the dead. Tears coursed down the bronzed and bearded cheeks and were dashed away by brawny hands that had swung the pick for many years. The rescuing party proceeded with their grim task and the crowd of watchers silently looked on. Fifty coffins arrived from Pittsburgh this morning and another half hundred will reach here tonight. An additional order for twenty-five more were sent this morning. The cause of the explosion is not yet determined. The coroner is on the ground and a thorough investigation will be made.

#### THE CAUSE OF THE DISASTER.

The roll call of all men is in progress