

REPORT
OF THE
MINE INSPECTOR FOR THE
TERRITORY OF ALASKA

TO THE
SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR
ENDED JUNE 30
1913



May, 1914.

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REPORT OF THE MINE INSPECTOR FOR THE TERRITORY OF ALASKA.

SIR: The report submitted herewith presents a general and brief summary of the more important matters relating to the mineral industry of the Territory in the fiscal year ended June 30, 1913. In view of the permission granted to make reports of accidents by the calendar year rather than the fiscal year, a detailed statement covering accidents reported and mines inspected during the calendar year 1913 will be submitted later.

One serious accident, a snowslide in the Copper River district which destroyed a bunk house and killed 9 men, increased the death rate per total number of men employed, though the ratio of fatalities underground was somewhat lower than in the previous fiscal year.

Of great importance to the mining industry was the action taken by the Territorial legislature at its first session in passing several acts for the benefit of the industry and for the protection of miners.

ACTS PASSED BY LEGISLATURE BEARING ON MINING.

CREATION OF OFFICE OF TERRITORIAL MINE INSPECTOR.

The bill creating the office of Territorial mine inspector was approved by the governor of the Territory on April 30.

CHAPTER 72.

[Senate Bill No. 52.]

An act to divide the Territory into mine-inspection districts; to establish the office of mine inspector; to prescribe the duties, powers, qualifications, and compensation thereof; to regulate the operation of mines in the Territory of Alaska; to provide for the health and safety of mine workers in the Territory; to declare the violation of any of the provisions hereof a misdemeanor and providing punishment therefor.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Territory of Alaska:

SECTION 1. As soon as practicable after the passage of this act, and not later than the first day of April, nineteen hundred and fourteen, the governor of the Territory of Alaska shall appoint one qualified person to be inspector of mines; such inspector shall be known as the Territorial mine inspector and he shall be under the supervision and subject to the instructions of the Federal mine inspectors now appointed as provided by law.

No person shall be appointed a mine inspector who shall not be a citizen of the United States and who has not been a resident of the Territory of Alaska for at least three years. Every person appointed to the office of mine inspector must be theoretically and practically acquainted with mines and mining in all branches, and he shall hold his office for a period of two years unless sooner removed by the governor. No person shall hold the position of inspector of mines while an employee or officer of any company or corporation. Each inspector of mines shall devote his entire time and attention to the duties of his office, and the salary of each inspector shall be \$2,500 per annum, and he shall be allowed his actual and necessary traveling expenses while in the performance of his duties under the provisions of this act, and such salary and expenses shall be paid monthly.

SEC. 2 It is the duty of the Territorial mine inspector to visit the mining sections assigned to him by the Federal mine inspector or the governor of the Territory, and

examine as many mines therein as practicable, inspect their workings, timbering, ventilation, means of ingress and egress, and the means adopted and in use for the preservation of the lives and safety of the miners employed therein. For this purpose the inspector at all times shall have access to any mine and all parts thereof. All mine owners, lessees, lessors, agents, operators, managers, or superintendents must render such assistance as may be necessary to enable the inspector to make the examination. When upon such examination any mine or portion thereof is found to be in an unsafe or insecure condition, the inspector shall at once serve a notice in writing upon the owner, lessees, lessors, agent, operator, manager, or superintendent thereof setting forth the nature of the defects which render such mine unsafe or insecure, and the point or place in such mine where such defect exists, and requiring the repairs necessary to remedy such defects to be made within a specified time; and, if in his judgment the circumstances so require, he shall forbid the operation of such mine or portion thereof as has been declared unsafe or insecure, save and except for the purpose of making the repairs necessary for the purpose of remedying such defects and making such mine safe and secure for the laborers employed therein.

SEC. 3. Whenever the inspector of mines receives a complaint in writing signed by three or more parties setting forth that any mine is dangerous in any respect, the inspector must, as soon as possible, visit and examine such mine. Every such complaint must set forth the nature of the danger existing at the mine and the time and cause of such danger was first discovered.

SEC. 4. If upon such examination the inspector of mines ascertains that the mine is from any cause in a dangerous condition, he must at once notify the owner, lessor, lessee, agent, manager, operator, or superintendent. Such notice must state fully and in detail in what particular manner such mine is dangerous or insecure and require all necessary changes to be made without delay, for the purpose of making such mine safe and secure for the laborers employed therein; and in any criminal or civil proceeding at law against the party or parties so notified, on account of loss of life or bodily injury sustained by the employee subsequent to the service of such notice and in consequence of a neglect to obey the inspector's requirements, a certified copy of the notice served by the inspector is prima facie evidence of the gross negligence of the party or parties so complained of. If the owner, lessee, lessor, agent, operator, manager, or superintendent of any such mine shall neglect or refuse to cause the repairs necessary to remedy such defect to be made within a reasonable time, or shall refuse to cause work to be stopped when so ordered, such party or parties shall be prosecuted criminally by the inspector.

SEC. 5. Whenever a serious or fatal accident occurs in any mine it is the duty of the person in charge thereof to immediately notify the inspector of the mining inspection district wherein such mine is located, in the quickest manner possible, and upon receiving such notice the inspector of mines must, if possible, at once repair to the place of accident and investigate fully the cause of such accident, and whenever possible to do so the inspector shall be present at the coroner's inquest held over the remains of the person or persons killed by such accident and testify as to the cause thereof and state whether, in his opinion, the accident was due to the negligence or mismanagement of the owner or person in charge. If the inspector can not immediately be present in case of a fatal or serious accident occurring, it is the duty of the owner or person in charge of the mine to have written statements made by those witnessing the same and sworn to. In case no person was present at the time of the accident, then the verified statement of those first present after the accident must be taken and such statement must be forwarded to the inspector. If, after making such investigation, the inspector deems the facts warrant it, he may prosecute criminally the owner, lessee, lessor, agent, operator, manager, or superintendent of the mine in which the accident occurred.

SEC. 6. Each inspector of mines must make a monthly report to the governor, and the report must give a statement of all mines visited by him; a statement of all the accidents that have occurred in his inspection district which have occasioned serious injury or resulted fatally, together with the nature and cause of such accidents. Such report shall also contain such additional information as the governor may require and must set forth the result of the inspector's labors.

SEC. 7. The provisions of this act do not apply to mines in which less than six people are employed.

SEC. 8. Any person or corporation failing to comply with any of the provisions of this act is punishable by a fine of not less than \$25 nor more than \$500, or by imprisonment in the Federal jail not less than ten days nor more than six months, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

Approved, April 30, 1913.

With the authority granted by this act and the assistance rendered it will be possible for the mine inspectors to visit the principal mining districts several times annually. They will be able to keep in closer touch with operations in their districts and to visit the scene of an accident more promptly. The compulsory reporting of all serious accidents and first-hand information regarding the majority of them will enable this office to make a report containing data of vastly greater value to the mining industry than one which could be compiled under the provisions of the present Federal law alone.

OTHER ACTS PASSED.

In addition to the act creating the office of Territorial mine inspector the Territorial legislature passed the following acts that bear directly on the mining industry:

CHAPTER 8 (senate bill No. 19). An act to regulate the purchase of ore.

CHAPTER 9 (senate bill No. 31). An act to prevent employees from being oppressed by reason of an employer compelling them to board at a particular boarding house, or to purchase goods or supplies at a particular store and providing a penalty for violations thereof.

CHAPTER 29 (senate bill No. 1). An act to declare employment in underground mines, applied to metalliferous lode mining only as applied to hard-rock mining, underground workings, open-cut workings, open-pit workings, smelters, reduction works, stamp mills, roller mills, concentrating mills, chlorination processes, cyanide processes, and coke ovens to be injurious to health and dangerous to life and limb. To regulate and limit the hours of employment in said occupations; to declare the violation thereof a misdemeanor and to provide a penalty for the violation thereof.

CHAPTER 30 (senate bill No. 21). An act making it a felony to take, remove, or conceal any ore, mineral, amalgam, precipitates, concentrates, or any other mineral-bearing substance from any mine, sampler, smelter, concentrating mill, chlorination mill, cyanide mill, or other reduction works, with intent to steal the same or defraud the owner thereof, and providing a penalty therefor.

CHAPTER 36 (house bill No. 30). An act prohibiting the use of deception, misrepresentation, false advertising, and false pretenses and unlawful force in the procuring of employees to work in any department of labor in this Territory, and fixing penalties criminal and civil for violation thereof.

CHAPTER 45 (house bill No. 22). An act to fix the liability of employers for personal injuries sustained by their employees.

CHAPTER 49 (house bill No. 74). An act to provide for the filing of grubstake contracts and prospecting agreements.

CHAPTER 53 (house bill No. 97). An act to make appropriation for the Territory of Alaska for the fiscal year ending December 31, 1913, and for the fiscal year ending December 31, 1914, and for the quarter ending March 31, 1915. [This bill carries the appropriation for the salary and expenses of the Territorial mine inspector.]

CHAPTER 55 (senate bill No. 61). An act declaring the use of water for mining, power, and other purposes, and the use of pole and tower lines for telephone and telegraph purposes, for aerial trams, and for the transmission of electric light and power to be a public use and providing for the condemnation of the rights of way therefor.

CHAPTER 70 (senate bill No. 26). An act to provide for the amicable adjustment of differences that may arise between employers and employees.

CHAPTER 74 (senate bill No. 11). An act to supplement the mining laws of the United States in their application to the Territory of Alaska; providing for the location and possession of mining claims in Alaska and repealing all acts and parts of acts in conflict herewith to the extent of such conflicts.

CHAPTER 78 (house bill No. 89). An act to create a board of commissioners to provide a home for aged prospectors in interior Alaska.

CHAPTER 79 (house bill No. 91). An act to create, establish, and provide for liens on mines in favor of laborers and material men, and repealing all acts and parts of acts in conflict herewith.

CHAPTER 80 (house bill No. 94). An act to provide for the acceptance and use of the United States Marine Barrack buildings at Sitka, Alaska, as a home for indigent prospectors and others who have spent their years in Alaska and become dependent, and to create a commission for the government of the same.

WORK OF INSPECTOR'S OFFICE.**SITUATION OF HEADQUARTERS.**

The present headquarters of the Federal mine inspector are in the courthouse at Juneau, in a room which is occupied through the courtesy of the Department of Justice. Application has been made for the assignment of office space in the new Federal building to be erected at Juneau. This can be used as the central office for the Territory.

NEEDS OF OFFICE.

At present the office of the Federal mine inspector lacks funds for clerical hire, office furniture, emergency printing, technical instruments or laboratory work. The appropriation for expenses should be increased and made to cover such printing, stenographic work, and clerical hire as are necessary for the prompt and efficient collection of information relating to mine accidents; it should be made to cover such items as rent of telephone and the purchase of necessary office furniture. With the granting of patents to some of the coal claims in the Territory and the probability of the development of coal mines, provision should be made for deputy inspectors to inspect the coal mines at more frequent intervals than is now possible.

DISTRICTS VISITED.

Trips of inspection were made through the Fairbanks and Nome placer-mining districts, the coal field of Controller Bay, and the lode mines of southeastern Alaska, Kenai Peninsula, and the Willow Creek part of the Susitna district.

In connection with work in the Bering River coal field the inspector visited Washington, D. C., where he conferred with mining engineers of the Federal Bureau of Mines, and conferred with the State mine inspectors of Colorado and Idaho to compare the work carried on in the States with that being done in Alaska.

DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLICATIONS.

A small supply of the publications printed by the Federal Bureau of Mines has been kept in this office for local distribution, and the names of those who have wished to be notified of the issue of new publications have been forwarded to the Director of the Bureau of Mines at Washington, D. C. Copies of the first annual report for this office, covering the fiscal year ended June 30, 1912, have been mailed to those making application for them.

CONDITION OF THE MINING INDUSTRY.

Your inspector has made no attempt to collect data relative to the total mineral production of the Territory, such figures being collected by the United States Geological Survey, but the mining industry has shown a substantial gain during the year. To date over 40 dredges have been placed on the Seward Peninsula, one of which is solely for stream tin. Dredges were also in operation in the Circle, Fairbanks,

and Iditarod districts. Over 17 ore mills were shipped into the territory immediately tributary to Fairbanks, and lode mining in that vicinity has received a strong impetus. On Prince William Sound several new shippers of copper ore entered the market, and at Juneau two companies have been at work on a large scale opening the low-grade lodes of Silver Bow Basin. A small though steady output of both gypsum and marble has been made from southeastern Alaska, and with the patenting of some of the coal claims a small amount of development work on these claims has been done.

LABOR CONDITIONS.

There has been an ample supply of labor in all fields. There was a considerable influx into the Juneau district, the new operations there causing approximately 1,500 new employes to enter that district. The scale of wages in southeastern Alaska is practically the same as that paid in the States for the same work; in the interior \$5 a day with board is paid for shovelers—pointmen, carpenters, blacksmiths, and engineers receiving proportionately higher pay. Considering the expense of living, board being figured at \$2.25 a day, and the high transportation costs, these wages are relatively low.

The recently enacted 8-hour law for metalliferous lode mining goes into effect July 24, 1913, though a number of the operators have not waited for that date to comply with its provisions. No instance has been noted of wages being cut on account of this law, although some of the operators have based the wages for outside employment on an hourly scale.

Living conditions remain much the same as stated in the report for 1912. At the lode mines, where there is a permanent organization, living accommodations are good as a rule, whereas in many parts of the placer districts, where work is intermittent, crowded bunk houses and lack of bathing facilities have driven away much of the English-speaking labor. During the period covered by this report there were no labor troubles in the Territory.

SOURCES OF ACCIDENT.

As in the past, the most fruitful sources of accident have been falls of rock and accidental explosions. Under the new Territorial law, which compels the operators to give the mine inspectors notice of all serious accidents so that the causes can be investigated, it will be possible to tabulate the accidents in detail and to take more active precautions to insure safety.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE BETTERMENT OF MINING CONDITIONS.

The following recommendations are offered for the betterment of the miner and the advancement of the mining industry:

The governor of the Territory of Alaska should be empowered to appoint a committee to investigate and report on the feasibility of a Territorial insurance fund for those employed in the mining industry, both employers and employes to contribute to this fund.

The Federal appropriation for mine inspection in Alaska should be increased and extended to cover necessary office expenditures, printing, and clerical assistance.

The Director of the Bureau of Mines should be empowered to assign such assistants to the mine inspector as he may deem necessary for the proper carrying on of the work.

Very respectfully,

SUMNER S. SMITH,
Mine Inspector for Alaska.

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

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