

COAL MINE FIRES BURN FOR YEARS

Deep Underground Fires Still
One of Great Problems of
Illinois Mining

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., Feb. 3.—(By The Associated Press).—Fires burning for years in coal mines, deep beneath the ground, are one of the unsolved problems of coal mining in Illinois.

Many of these fires, walled up years ago, recently have caused trouble in southern Illinois, according to Robert M. Medill, director of the state department of mines and minerals.

The Donk brothers mine at Collinsville, the North mine of the Illinois and Indiana Coal corporation at Witt, and several mines near Springfield, have been compelled recently to seal up portions of their workings to prevent the spread of these smouldering furnaces, which burn without stopping in the hidden chambers underground. One mine was ordered closed entirely.

The fires start in the refuse which is left after the coal is dug and are caused by a process similar to spontaneous combustion, according to Mr. Medill. The miners call them "gob fires," from the word applied by coal diggers to the debris in the mine.

They do not flare up in flame, but burn slowly, smouldering away for years until they eat themselves out of fuel. Chambers where these fires start become a mass of live red coals and must be sealed up to keep the air from them.

The trouble is caused when a fire eats its way through a wall and threatens to break through into the mine workings. Sometimes the smouldering coals eat up the supporting coal pillars resulting in weakening the support for the ground above.

These fires cannot be extinguished by water, Mr. Medill stated. Water only makes them worse. It is the chemical reaction resulting from the mixing of water and the refuse that causes the original combustion. The only way to stop the fires is to remove the burning coals from the mine. Many such fires may be seen on slack piles on the surface in this section of the state. These can be flooded with water and extinguished, Mr. Medill stated.

BOOK CHAT

Sensitive youth stumbling into the passionate world of love is the theme of Edward C. Booth's novel, "The Tree of the Garden," to be published this week by Appleton. It is a richly wrought piece of fiction, beautifully depicting the Yorkshire where in the main the scenes are laid. One sees in Thursday Hardip a young girl whose pastoral life has enclosed her within narrow horizons, and in Guy Openshaw a youth of well-off parentage between whom and contact with disillusioning reality has stood an over-anxious mother, herself afraid of life. On these three characters attention is focused. How love blossoms between the young people, how their love is misjudged, what follows in the steps of deceit and division, how life can appear in its most sinister boldness and not overcome loyalty and love, are of what Mr. Booth has the story to tell. "The Tree of the Garden" is being hailed as a novel of extraordinary significance in England, one in which the author of "Fondle" has entered into his rightful estate as one of the leaders of present day fiction.

Rose Macaulay, author of "Potterism," etc., is one of those whom Edward C. Booth's "The Tree of the Garden" has moved to delighted expression. She says: "By the side of 'The Tree of the Garden' most modern novels seem sharp, trivial, over-intelligent, dry, or colourless. It has the plump, full-juiced ripeness of a sweet apple." The Manchester Guardian says: "In Thursday Hardip Mr. Booth has created one of the great women of fiction." The Bookman (London) declares:

"The author steps into the front rank of present-day English novelists."

Fitzhugh Green is an Arctic explorer who in his new yarn, "The Mystery of the Erik," proves adept at story-telling. The fact that he has been a member of such expeditions as the Crocker Land Arctic expedition and the MacMillan expedition, which established a new record to the northwest on the Polar sea, indicates the exactness of his portrayal of the explorer's adventures. The story features an interesting mystery and includes a race back to civilization that is immensely exciting.

A husky young American, Rudd Winters, is the central character, the other being the remaining members of the crew of the Erik, which sails northward in the hope of passing through the famous Northwest passage.

Frances R. Sterrett, author of "The Amazing Inheritance," and other novels, made an interesting discovery during her summer abroad last year. She found that "German children are being taught Russian instead of French at present and every family which can afford it has a Russian governess, because Germans are looking forward to close relations with Russia." In view of constant reports of a rapprochement between Germany and Russia, Miss Sterrett's observation is illuminating.

"Absolutely petrified" is Miss Martha Miller's comment concerning her fainting spell when she was about to deliver her first lecture recently. This is one of the members of the Akeley gorilla hunt expedition in Africa, and if anyone wants to read of what Miss Miller accomplished in the way of lion hunting and other jungle occupations they should read Mary Hastings Bradley's new book "On the Gorilla Trail," which narrates the expedition's adventures in the dark continent. It is a very different matter to face a lion in the jungle and the men's club of the Park Presbyterian church, Newark, evidently. In Mrs. Bradley's book one also finds how her little five-year-old daughter Alice thrived amid the dangers and novelty of gorilla land, to which these ladies and other members of the expedition were the first American visitors.

Sir Horace Plunkett, nominated to the Irish senate, has arrived in the United States. If we were nominated to the Irish senate we think we would do the same thing.—American Lumberman (Chicago).

Lest We Forget--

That until very recently North Carolina had heard so much of her "poverty" that she thought she was indeed poor—

That the extent of our wealth and resources, perhaps because of this oft-repeated tale of woe, was never fully comprehended until we awakened suddenly to the realization that we could pay into the Federal Treasury a sum in excess of sixty millions of dollars revenue in a single calendar year—

That, two years ago, finally awakened to our true condition, alive to the great natural resources of the state, developed and undeveloped, we became alive at the same time to our responsibilities and to the fearful neglect we had countenanced in the policy of poverty touching our state's educational and charitable institutions—

That, thus aroused from a lethargy that had retarded our development for decades—retarded beyond what we can ever do to repair, development of the richest resource to which any people can fall heir, its youth—North Carolina people, as with one voice, demanded that their representatives in government should reverse the age-old policy of poverty and conform to true conditions—

That, in the face of the worst business depression through which we have ever passed, but undaunted because they knew the substantial foundation of the state's intrinsic wealth, the patriotic people of North Carolina first pleaded for and then demanded a progressive program for education—demanded that there be appropriations for building commensurate with the need, and appropriations for support that would take into consideration an enlarged service to the state—

That, finally, at the polls last fall, this same patriotic citizenship of the state stamped their approval upon the aggressive, progressive policies adopted in the last general assembly, thereby expressing a desire, as can readily be interpreted, that such policies be continued and—should necessity arise—even broadened!

We Had Vision In Adversity— Shall We Lose It In Prosperity?

If we, as a people, could recognize our responsibilities and show an overwhelming desire—passion, even—to discharge them while business depression enveloped us, is there any good reason why we should experience a change of heart with returning prosperity?

The fundamental wealth of North Carolina, its resources, has suffered no change during the past two years. Indeed, we are richer today because conditions are more favorable to the development of those resources; we are in better condition to discharge our obligations!

And the very public programs that were instituted at the behest of those now termed the "ultra-progressives" have added cubits to the stature of North Carolina as a state that stands for something, a state possessed not only of immeasurable wealth, but vision as well—and with it all the determination to use its God-given talents!

Is North Carolina richer or poorer for the millions that have been spent during the past two years for the building of good roads and the erection of permanent plants for the training of our youth and the care of our unfortunates? Do we charge those millions to expense, or do we look to them as an investment from which we are already receiving rich returns and will receive ever richer dividends as the years go by?

Shall the Spirit of Reaction Blind North Carolina to the Truth?

We are called "propagandists of progressivism," "tax-spenders"—but we would also like you to know that, like yourselves, we are "taxpayers." It is our money that we urged the state to spend two years ago—that has been spent to greater advantage than any we ever previously spent. And it is our money we are willing that the state should continue to spend so long as the necessity for such expenditure exists, because we are not spending it for someone else but for ourselves!

Again—by whatever name the reactionary chooses to call us—we come to you people of North Carolina now, as we did two years ago, not to muddy the waters and camouflage the situation, but to "face the facts." And the facts are incontrovertible. We are willing and anxious that you should know them and act upon them in accordance with your better judgment. The facts as to the ability of North Carolina, financially, to prosecute, on an even broader scale, the progressive program of education undertaken two years ago we believe are before you.

Has the program thus far been justified? You have said so at the polls. But let us emphasize the facts that not only have our institutions shown themselves to be worthy of the trust we have reposed in them, equal to the undertaking of building wisely and well on a scale never before projected in the state, but their prophecies of two years ago regarding immediate and developing needs—calls upon them for greater service—have been fulfilled.

Two years ago we asked that these institutions be given according to the measure of their needs; and in that request we had the well-nigh unanimous support of the men and women of North Carolina. That is all we are asking today—that the program begun shall be continued according to the measure of the need, for both building and support. And, necessarily, the cost of maintenance must be vastly increased or the physical plants we build for the training of our boys and girls will become liabilities rather than assets.

Denying the funds needed for further physical equipment of these institutions, we will be curtailing the wealth that knows no measure, an educated citizenship. Denying proper maintenance for these institutions, they will rise to mock our stupidity. Reduced to final analysis, it is a business proposition. Let North Carolina meet it in a business way—go forward with it and quit quibbling.

We Appeal to You

To every civic organization, to every fraternal order, to every club of men and women banded together for the cause of progress, to every parent and teacher, to every man and woman who has been enriched by the blessings of higher educational training—to let your voice be heard in Raleigh, that the present general assembly may know that the spirit of reaction is not the spirit of North Carolina. Your representatives there are pledged to your cause. Let them know what that cause is.

Association for Promotion of Education in North Carolina

A. M. Scales

General Director

Greensboro, N. C.