

Aptitude Tests Successful In Indicating Latent Skills In Apprentices

WASHINGTON (LPA)—Use of aptitude tests in selecting applicants for apprenticeship in the skilled trades has expanded rapidly in recent years, a survey con-

ducted recently by the Labor Department's Bureau of Employment Security shows.

The survey, which covered half the States, show that an increasing number of candidates for apprenticeship are being given aptitude tests at public employment offices to measure their opportunities for success in specific occupations.

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"The Black Hole Of Ludlow"



A great procession of bitter, grieving coal miners accompanied this and other horse-drawn hearses which carried the caskets of the 19 victims of the April 20, 1914, Ludlow (Colo.) Massacre to their final resting place. Five men and a boy were shot when state troopers, many of them professional strikebreakers and company thugs, made an unprovoked attack on the tent homes of evicted miners on strike against the feudal working conditions of the Rockefeller interests. Two women and 11 children were burned to death so suffocated when the troops set fire to the tents. (LPA).

Reign Or Terror At Ludlow, Colo., Only Helped Strengthen Miners

LUDLOW, Colo., (LPA)—The charred remnants of a tent colony that had been the home of 1200 people presented a ghastly sight in the morning sun of April 21, 1914.

In a hole under one of the tents—"The Black Hole of Ludlow"—were 13 bodies, two of women, 11 of children, the youngest a three-month-old baby.

The fire had been no accident. It had been set deliberately the night before by the Colorado state militia—the climax of a day of slaughter and terror inflicted upon striking United Mine Workers and their families.

The strike, against the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, a Rockefeller property, had been going on intermittently for about three years. The tent colony had replaced the homes from which the miners had been evicted.

The issues which had brought on the strike were many and had become increasingly unbearable. In violation of the laws, the miners were denied the eight-hour day, paid in scrip, forced to trade at company stores, cheated in their pay and refused safety devices in the mines. Hundreds met death in mine accidents, but nothing ever was done about it because the mine owners controlled the legal and political machinery of the state, as well as the militia.

On the morning of April 20, 1914, the militia, swollen with imported gun thugs and adventurers, was camped all around the Ludlow tent colony. The miners had only a few guns because they had been compelled to surrender the rest of them to the officers in charge of the militia.

Rumors had been circulating that the militia intended to destroy the Ludlow colony and dawn had scarcely broken on April 20 when the strikers' families were awakened by the roar of machine guns and the ripping of canvas as bullets tore through the temporary shelters.

In expectancy of the sneak attack, holes had been dug under the tents and some of the women and children hastily jumped into these. Hundreds of others fled into the hills or to nearby ranch houses.

The miners returned the fire with guns they had, staying away from the tents to draw the gunfire away from their families. But the bullets continued to pour into the encampment anyway and the women and children were forced to lie in the holes all day without food or water. An 11-year-old boy, William Snyder, who tried to climb out of his hole to get water, had his head blown off.

One miner's wife, Mrs. Pearl Jolly, was shot in the arm while moving through the encampment to care for the wounded. The militia ignored the big red cross on her white dress.

In the evening, a freight train pulled into a siding between the

Ludlow colony and the miners and some of the women and children tried to use it as a shield while escaping. But a dozen armed militiamen threatened to shoot the engineer unless he moved the train "damn quick."

When the militia swarmed down to set fire to the tents, the people still left in the encampment managed to flee—all except the 13 in the "Black Hole."

One entire family was wiped out in the massacre. Mrs. Pedelina Costa and her two children died in the fire and her husband was one of five miners killed in the militia attack. Three other miners were shot to death while under the guard of militiamen who had taken them prisoners. One of them was Louis Tikas, a strike leader. He was standing defenseless when the militia leader, Lt. E. K. Linderfelt, broke a rifle butt over his head and then walked away while militiamen riddled Tikas' body with bullets. James Fyler, secretary-treasurer of the union, also was shot by his guards.

The militia added to its crimes by stealing from the dead and looting the encampment while setting fire to the tents, but the only punishment imposed for the thievery or the killings was a slight demotion for Lt. Linderfelt.

Recounting these and other facts, The U. S. Commission on Industrial Relations appointed by President Woodrow Wilson to investigate the massacre, concluded that there was ample evidence to support the charge that the militia was "an instrument of suppression maintained for the purpose of intimidating and crushing workmen who go on strike in an effort to improve the conditions of life for themselves, their women and children, and to secure for themselves a larger measure of freedom from arbitrary power."

But the miners were not to be intimidated by the April 20 reign of terror. Edward Keating, who only recently retired after 33 years as editor of Labor, weekly newspaper of the rail brotherhoods, was then a Colorado Congressman.

He got a Congressional investigation of the Ludlow Massacre by persuading Democratic members of the House to override the powerful Rules Committee, which opposed the probe. It was the only time the House ever took such action. The widespread publicity on the battle helped in the strong organization of the southern Colorado miners which followed.

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Safety Know-How Fooled Through The National State Conference

More workers and their families will enjoy Labor Day this year because of the President's Conference on Occupational Safety, recently ordered by President Eisenhower to intensify its work.

There top leaders of labor, management, insurance companies, State and Federal agencies, educators and private safety organizations meet in conference and committee to alert the Nation to changing job hazards and to promote the use of tested safety techniques at the workplaces of America.

Organized in 1948 by President Truman, the Conference gave a needed shot in the arm to a national safety movement which, despite earlier spectacular gains, had settled down to a stubborn annual toll of some 16,000 job fatalities and 2 million work injuries. Greater attention to safety by all concerned has brought manufacturing injury frequency rates to the lowest on record for the first quarter of 1953, according to the latest report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics. But the Bureau warns that the trend may be moving to higher levels already.

When President Eisenhower asked the Secretary of Labor, Martin P. Durkin, to intensify the work of the Conference he said: "Management, labor, and public and private agencies share an obligation to safeguard their fellow workers employed in the work places of the Nation. It is appropriate that the Federal Government provide a means of bringing together these vast resources to curb accidents to workers."

Immediately upon this request from the President the new labor members of the Co-ordinating Committee of the Conference joined with others to plan the next big annual Conference.

The new labor members are George Meany, President of A. F. of L. and Walter Reuther, President of the CIO. Mr. Meany's alternates are Boris Shishkin, Director of Social Insurance Activities and James Brownlow, President of the Metal Trades Department. Mr. Reuther's alternates are Michael Quill, Transport Workers, and Harry Read, Executive Assistant to the Secretary-Treasurer, CIO.

The main purpose of the President's Conference on Occupational Safety is to pool the best safety knowledge available in the Nation and get it out to the workbenches where accidents occur, to quicken and stimulate the States to greater safety activity, and to provide a non-partisan forum for all interests in the field of accident prevention and control.

The aim to offer aid and assistance to the States when requested has borne fruit in 22 Governor's Conferences and the full co-operation of States with safety conferences already in existence. Most of the Governor's Conferences have held one or more annual meetings and have, through their technical committees, produced recommendations to reduce and control accidents. Many of these recommendations call for strengthening of safety laws and

codes. In the last four years twenty-six States and Territories have strengthened their safety laws. A total of 111 safety codes having the force and effect of law have been issued, amended or revised.

The teaching of safety in elementary, secondary schools and colleges and universities is another activity encouraged by the Conference with special emphasis placed on training tomorrow's engineers in safe design of machinery. The Research Committee of the Conference has prepared a technical report on the role of human behavior in accident prevention and is carrying out other special research projects. The Engineering Committee has recommended many safety efforts of

consequence and the Committee on Labor-Management adopted and publicized a series of principles for better safety co-operation between management and labor. Other Conference Committees are active in every field which will contribute to better accident prevention in the work places of the Nation.

Labor's League for Political Education was formed by the American Federation of Labor to carry out the non-partisan political program of the AFL.

L. L. P. E. membership is voluntary and open to all AFL members upon whose individual contributions all of the L. L. P. E. election activities depend.

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