

The Knowledge Bank at The Ohio State University
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Ohio Institute of Mining Engineers.

COLUMBUS, OHIO, January 21st, 1892.

7:30 o'clock P. M.

The Convention was called to order by President Howells, who said:

Gentlemen, and the Members of the Ohio Institute and Mining Engineers: I am very glad to have the happiness of meeting you once more in your annual meeting, and I am certainly glad to see so many here, considering the inclemency of the weather, and probably a great many came from a distance. It shows that you are all interested in the society. Now, I shall not probably make extended remarks, for the reason that the report of the Secretary will certainly give you much more light than I can in anything that I can say as to the work of the society during the last year. But then I might say here that I think the work is very well done. I think the society is not dead, in fact I don't think it is sick. I believe it is alive and in excellent shape and particularly in good condition; and I believe that we all can say that the prosperous condition of the society is attributable as much to our Secretary here as to any one, more so perhaps than any one in the society, and my advise is when you have a good thing to take hold of it and keep it, and when you come to elect a secretary I, for one, hope you will keep the same gentleman as Secretary that you have now. (A voice, "And President too.")

Now, there are some of you perhaps that did not meet with us in the summer meeting, which I am very sorry for, because I believe it was one of the most pleasurable as well as instructive summer meetings that this society ever had. Those of you that did meet with us no doubt will carry me out in what I say about that, and I have heard it whispered that the next summer meeting will much surpass it if it is possible, consequently I hope that every one here and in fact every member of the society will make it a point to go with the society wherever they go next summer. For myself I don't know whether I shall be able to go or not, I think not now, but if I shall not be able to be with you in the

flesh I shall try at least to be with you in the spirit. There is one paper to be read here that has particularly taken my notice, and that is the paper by Mr. Haseltine on the "Wasteful methods being practiced in mining coal in the State of Ohio," and it struck me as being a very excellent paper. I will say nothing however about the paper yet, but the theme is excellent and it is what we ought to have more of. We ought to have more papers read on the exhaustive mining of coal in the State of Ohio. I think it is one of the principal things in mining. There are perhaps three matters in my own idea that belong to good practical and profitable mining. That is, a mine boss or superintendent should understand how to carry his air around the workings of the mine. He should understand how to mine coal with as little cost as is possible, and especially he ought to understand the best method of exhaustless mining, or in other words to bring every pound of coal out of the mine that it is possible to bring.

Now, we all know, that the methods practiced in the State of Ohio and probably in many other States, and perhaps all of them, though I am not acquainted with all, but the method practiced in mining coal in this State is such that it leaves thousands upon thousands of tons that are never mined. Now, the question for us to solve, and try to educate ourselves upon is what is the cause that so much coal is left in the mines in the State of Ohio that ought to be mined. I have been thinking on this matter myself, and I came to this conclusion as to perhaps one of the reasons, if not the supreme reason, that the operator or the owner of a mine, or owners if you wish, are not practical miners themselves. They invest their money in mining as they would in any other branch of business, expecting to get a revenue or interest for the money invested, and the sooner it comes and the more of it that does come, the better they like it.

Now, it is very reasonable that everybody should feel so, and that is the very reason, which is at the bottom of this wasteful method of mining coal in the State of Ohio. Now, you get an operator or a miner that is not a practical man himself, it is more than likely that he will employ a superintendent that is not practical also. The superintendent just as likely as not will employ a mine boss that is not competent, and a mine boss that is competent will know this fact that the man who has invested his money in that mine expects to get returns and as quick as possible. Then to save his reputation as a mine boss he will go to work taking coal out as quick as possible, and in any shape that he can, and probably his reputation will be established in a short time, but in a year or two he will lose his reputation because he

has not practiced the proper method of mining and it had become too expensive, and as I said before in mining coal thousands of tons are left in the mine. Now, a man might be a mine boss and probably a good man under certain conditions; you might have a man that would begin the same mine, probably he has been in that same mine as a boss five, six, eight or ten years, and as far as practical ability to mine, be that individual mine or any other mine under the same conditions, why he is an excellent man. But in my opinion no man is thoroughly practical unless he is theoretically practical just as well as otherwise. That he is practical under certain conditions, but when the conditions change, his practice that he had under the former condition will not work under the present. Consequently it is necessary to be practical that a man should have theoretical knowledge as well as practical. Now, for instance you have a mine, and Mr. Roy has been a mine boss in this mine for ten years; he was made a bank boss there as we call it. That mine perhaps has got a covering say of 50 feet or 40 feet or 60 feet, and the cover is of shaley matter, and if any squeeze comes it breaks down with the ribs as we say and there is no squeeze. Now, that is perfectly evident. He understands that part of it thoroughly, no man can do any better and he has his reputation up as being an excellent mine boss. Perhaps the next conditions he has a mine that is 250 feet deep or probably a hundred feet of solid sand rock above the coal. Now then, we all know as practical men and theoretical men that if he adopts the same method in this mine as he did in that mine, that he will not be a success. If he leaves the same amount of pillars in this mine as in the former he will not be a success. A squeeze will take place. This rock will give and after she commences nothing will stop her until she comes right square against the bottom. Consequently it smashes the pillars of coal and thousands of tons of coal are left inside of this mine that it won't pay to look after. Now, as I said before, if Mr. Roy has the theoretical knowledge of mining as well as the practical part of it, he can do as well in this mine as he did in the former, but if he does not have that knowledge he will not do it, and that is one reason that there are thousands upon thousands of tons of coal left in the mines of the State of Ohio that are never mined.

Now, there was something not long ago came under my observation in regard to that. I know of a mine that is not one year old that has taken a squeeze and endangered, both main shaft and the air shaft, it squeezed all around. Well now we all know, as men that know anything about coal mining that such a condition of things should not be. Well now why was

it done? Just as I stated here that the owner of the mine is not a practical man, neither practical in work or theoretically, and he believed of course that this man that he had was all right. He commenced taking coal out quick; he wanted to make a showing. He turned a room here and turned a room there, no method whatever, and the first thing he knew the squeeze took place. Now take a man as a mine boss in a mine that is 100 feet deep. He has been there and he has never been any other place. He understands that mine thoroughly. He has opened that pump up so many times that he knows it just as well as he knows his own child, and can tell all about it, but theoretically he knows nothing about it. He can't tell you why such a thing exists. He can't tell you why it does so and so, but he knows that pump does its work. Now then, that man probably is a good man in every shape and form and he gets his reputation up and is hired by another company. Probably the next place he goes the mine is 200 feet or 250 feet deep. Now then, not having any knowledge theoretically about that pump, naturally the former pump was doing well in that place, and naturally that man will want the same pattern, the same kind of pump in his new place, while if he understood anything about the theory of pumping, he never would do so, but would have a different one entirely. Now this is my opinion as to a man placed under different conditions without a theoretical knowledge of mining, that is a knowledge from reading works on mining, on different subjects of mining, which is theoretical, not merely the practical part alone but papers or books as we read papers here on different branches of mining, so that he will have a knowledge thorough and practical. I am more impressed than I was before, although perhaps a great many think that it is wrong to say so, and that the mere practical man makes the best mine boss, but as I say I am much more impressed and become more so all the time that it is necessary that the superintendent of a mine should have theoretical knowledge equally as well as a practical knowledge, before he is one that can bring about the results of exhaustive mining. There is nothing in the world pertaining to mines either in this State or any other State that should be or is more important than the exhaustiveness of mining of coal from the ground, because every ton you lose is lost, and if the operator were a practical man and understood it thoroughly and understood what they might gain by bringing coal out quick and saving a little money on the start, if he knew and could see it as a practical man he could see that the end would be disaster. Consequently I am very glad that more light be thrown upon this subject by Mr. Haseltine's paper. I think we ought to have

more such papers, and I am very glad our Secretary has taken the matter in hand and brought it before the Institute. Now then, with no further remarks, as we have a great many things to go through, we shall proceed with the other business of the Institute. (Applause.)

Now then, gentlemen, as I said in the beginning you will have a very comprehensive report from our Secretary, I have no doubt, and it is next on the programme.