

BLOW UP THE MINES.

Kruger's Intention to Destroy Those in the Rand.

Concerning the attempted destruction of the Rand mines, during the occupation of Pretoria by the Boer government, it has leaked out that assistant State Mining Engineer Munnik had orders to that effect from President Kruger, while State Mining Engineer Klimke was in Europe. The story as told by a correspondent to an English paper is as follows:

Their amiable intention was whispered abroad, but of course indignantly denied, and possibly these rumors would have obtained little credence but for the accident that revealed their truth. A man of the name of Dempsey, an English engineer, had successfully managed to kidnap Mr. Munnik, acting state mining engineer in the absence of Mr. Klimke in Europe, and in the course of the operation had unfortunately shot him in the leg. This attack on Mr. Munnik by Mr. Dempsey had its origin in the former's complicity with the alleged attempt to wreck the mines, one of them being that on which Mr. Dempsey was employed. Dempsey was apprehended and arraigned for high treason, attempt to murder, assault with intent and several other little matters of a similar nature. In the course of the case, Mr. Dempsey's counsel asked Mr. Munnik whether he had received instructions from the government to drill holes in the shafts and make preparations for blowing up the mines. This question Mr. Munnik refused to answer, on the ground that any instructions received by him from his government were privileged, and to disclose them would be against the interests of the state. The judge ruled that Mr. Munnik was bound to answer, whereupon the latter, with engaging frankness, admitted that he had received orders to destroy twenty-five of the best mines on the Rand, and that he had carried out his instructions so far as to drill holes in the shafts for the necessary charges of dynamite. Dempsey was acquitted of the charge of high treason, but was found guilty on one of the minor indictments and was sentenced to five years imprisonment with hard labor.

When this statement of Munnik's became known, General Botha, who happened to be in Pretoria, went straight to President Kruger and stated that if there was any such intention on the part of the government he would not only lay down his arms but would withdraw every burgher of his command from the field. The president blustered, tore his hair, laid his hand upon his heart, and swore solemnly that there was no such act contemplated. At the General's request Munnik was then sent for, and repeated in the presence of the president the evidence he had given in the witness box. While this was in progress Mr. Klimke, just returned from Europe, and Mr. Munnik's superior, came on the scene and added his views to those of the general in no measured terms.

Faced by these two, and deserted by Munnik, Kruger was obliged to give in and give his undertaking that no such attempt should be made. Klimke then went further and demanded the express permission of the executive to have all the holes drilled by Munnik filled up and made safe. This permission was grudgingly given. Klimke at once gave instructions that the holes should be filled up with cement and the shafts repaired where damage had been done. The affair has caused a great sensation here, and it is agreed on all hands that General Botha and Mr. Klimke have behaved remarkably well."

Expert Versus Practical Miner.

The ancient warfare of opinion between

the so-called practical miner and the equally so-called mining expert is gradually becoming a dead issue. That there has been a hard and fast line drawn between the two classes has been largely the result of ignorance on both sides. Men spending their time from snow to snow among the hills, knocking their experience out of the eternal rocks with hammer and blast, knowing, as the trained woodsman knows the signs of the forest, every surface phase of the rocks of the district, met men whose training was purely academical and was often exceedingly slim at that, men without experience or mature judgment, whose knowledge was undigested for use by practical application. The practical man found his self-appointed superior lacking in all the knowledge that he esteemed most valuable and his scorn was but natural. On the other hand, men of scientific training, men versed in the geological structure of the earth's crust, trained observers, students, went out to meet men prejudiced against the men of book learning, often full of strange theories collected in their rambles, and fixed in their few scanty, incomplete and self-made principles. They, too, were scornful. But in recent years conditions have changed. The fake experts no longer fleece the public uncaught. The investing public is coming more and more to realize the value of a specialist's examination of its ore deposits, and it wants the best that can be got. The real expert must be as practical as he is theoretical. The two elements must balance each other in the successful mining man. Then he is valued.—Spokesman-Review.

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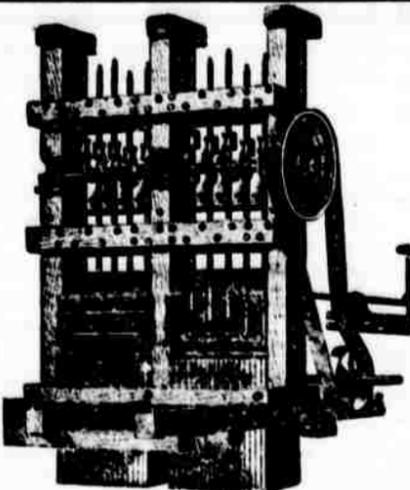
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