



COAL MINERS HAPPY—Tired but happy, these coal miners were among the first to report back to the Oakmont Mine at Barking, Pa., after its reopening following a close-down of nearly seven months. After so long a layoff,

eight hours in the "pit" have a telling effect, but not a single complaint was heard. From left, the miners are Tony Chiera, Charles Roller and Joe Rizane.

(UPI Telephoto)

Reopening of Coal Mine Brings Much Happiness in Pennsylvania Village

Editor's note: Although economic hardship prevails in much of the nation's coal fields, the closure of a handful of mines in Western Pennsylvania this week when one mine reopened after seven months of idleness. UPI Reporter Fred Treesh accompanied the first shift of miners into the reopened mine. In the following dispatch, he describes how the surprise recall brought new hope to the men. Unfortunately, industry spokesmen said, the reopening of one mine holds little prospect of better times for thousands of other mine workers still jobless.

By FREDERICK H. TREESH
Barking, Pa.—Ed Moffet hummed a happy tune as he swung a pick viciously at the wall of coal in front of him.

For Ed, each cut of the pick represented a niche in the mountain of debts that built up during months of idleness. "I'll tell you, it's nice to be back," said Moffet, a life-long miner from New Kensington, Pa., as he smoothed a place on the face of a mine tunnel for a mechanical drill to make its first bite in seven months.

A little after 8 a.m., Moffet and 20 other miners climbed onto an orange-colored electric train for a jolting, two-mile ride down the slope of the Oakmont Mine, located 20 miles northeast of Pittsburgh. It was their first trip through the winding tunnel since last July 29 when the mine closed because the coal it yielded no longer was needed.

Moffet and the others were put out of work, like thousands of other miners in the nation's coal fields, when the Oakmont Mine shut down.

Came Just in Time

Times were hard, and the future appeared black until their telephones rang a week ago. Word that the mine was reopening came just in time to avert economic disaster for most of the men who had only two or three more \$40 checks to draw before their unemployment compensation ran out.

Sixty-five men were called back to the mine initially. As work progressed inside the 40-year-old pit, more and more men will be recalled until the entire complement of 150 is back on the job, probably within four to six weeks. Each man will be earning at least \$25 a day.

The reopening of the Oakmont Mine with its \$1 million annual payroll will have little economic significance to the industry as a whole, according to an industry source. The spokesman said the mine, which has a 3,000-ton-a-day maximum output, was reactivated because of a "surplus of work" at other mines in operation.

The source noted that a major steel producer had expanded operations at two of its largest captive mines from three to five days a week. Another steel firm in Pittsburgh has relighted a furnace and refired an additional battery of coke ovens.

Although giving little consequence to these minute upturns, the industry source added, "a trickle here and a trickle there might mean something."

Smile Crosses Face

As John McCready switched on his helmet light and started down the long concrete staircase to the waiting mine train, a broad smile crossed his face. "It's good to be back," said McCready, a miner for 25 years who had experienced his first prolonged furlough.

"What you have saved up doesn't take long to go. I only had three more unemployment checks left."

McCready, from New Kensington, is married and the father of an 11-year-old son. To Walter Sabot of Lower Burrell, Pa., going back to

work is like "pennies from heaven."

"After seven months, everybody's happy to be back," Sabot said as he placed his lunch pail on the train seat and climbed in beside it.

"Things were pretty rough with the mortgage and utilities," he said while the train jolted along through the gray lime-coated tunnel. "I just got a \$40 gas bill because of the hard winter. It's going to be easier to pay now."

"My wife nearly fell over when she heard the mine was going to open again," Sabot said.

Raymond Jefferson of Arnold, like the other miners, was eager to start his first day back at work.

"I almost got a ticket driving over here," he said, beaming.

Jefferson said he was out when the mine superintendent telephoned his home last Tuesday with the news that the mine was reopening. His wife became so overcome with excitement and she couldn't tell him about it when he came home.

"My brother told me. At first I didn't believe it," Jefferson said, explaining that he and his brother, also a miner, frequently joked about the mine reopening, hardly daring to hope it ever would. Lester Howell of Apollo worked two hours overtime on his first day back, but he appeared fresh when he emerged from the mine.

Can Stand Extra Hours
"After the rest I had, I can stand a few extra hours," he said.

As he piloted a small self-propelled mine car through the cavernous interior of the mine, Howell explained what he and the other miners encountered when they tried to find new jobs after the Oakmont Mine closed.

"I went to several coal companies looking for work," Howell said. "They said they would like to employ me because of my experience, but they already had men of their own laid off. They couldn't hire me."

The miners were jubilant on their first day back in the pit.

Four or five joked as they guided a cutting machine into the solid coal face of a mine tunnel. When the machine blade, resembling a dinosaur tail, cut into the wall, a dense cloud of choking, blinding dust spewed forth. The men stepped back, coughing and wiping their eyes. But they still managed smiles.

"It'll take four doubleheaders of whisky to settle that dust," one of them quipped, evoking a chorus of laughs from the others.

Unable to Speak
The happiness was not confined to the mine, however. In a little four-room house on Barking's only street, Mrs. Ann Tromza, a portly matron, tried to put into words her feelings about the mine reopening. Tears welled in her eyes. For several minutes, she was unable to speak.

Then she recalled the many months of uncertainty when her husband, Pete, was idle. "When you don't have any work, there's no income," she said. "It was pretty bad. We just bought this house before the mine closed, and we had made a lot of repairs. It was awfully hard to meet the payments."

Mrs. Tromza said it would be easier now to clothe and feed her husband and their four children, aged 15, 8, 7, and 5.

"We don't have to scrape from the bottom of the barrel anymore," she said.

Boys From Valley On Harvard List

Three Rogue valley students at Harvard college were among the 12 Oregon boys there who have named to the dean's list on the basis of their grades for the academic year 1979-80.

They are Richard G. Corum, 30 Willamette ave., Medford; David L. Mack, Gold Hill, both juniors; and John M. Holt, 1335 NW Washington st., Grants Pass, sophomore.

In order to be placed on the Dean's list, a student must maintain an average of B or better for the year.

Berkeley, Calif. — There have been more anti-trust cases in the motion picture industry than in any other, reports Michael Conant, author of a recent study published by the University of California Press.

per cent while it was closed."

"The hardship even showed on the faces of the children who came into the store," Mrs. Miller said. "Even our candy business fell off."

Communities to Share

Storekeepers in dozens of communities around Barking are bound to share in the good times again just like the Millers. With the Oakmont Mine back in operation they are certain to reap the benefits of its \$1 million-a-year payroll.

But the infinite joy unchained by the lifting of their economic burden belongs to the miners and their families.

"When a miner goes back to work, the recession is over for him," observed one coal company official.

the help of his wife.

"We're tickled to death the mine's open again," Miller said. "Our business fell off 50

Capitol Memo

Appling Seen Good Bet for Congress In First District

By DOUGLAS GRIPP
Salem — UPI — Secretary of State Howell Appling Jr. is a good bet for Congress in the first district in 1982.



Douglas Gripp

This is the latest, and best, speculation on the political future of one of Oregon's most powerful Republicans. How ever, sources close to Appling say the candidacy hinges on at least one factor: That Republican Walter Norblad does not seek reelection. Appling would not oppose Norblad, they say, because he is not unhappy with Norblad's work in Congress.

Appling's chance could be in the offing.

Norblad is being touted as a challenger for U.S. Sen. Wayne Morse (D-Ore.) next year. Gov. Mark Hatfield has decided to go for reelection instead of Morse's seat.

Appling has ruled himself out of the U.S. Senate contest. He made it plain last week that his decision is "final, definite, clear and irrevocable."

Since Hatfield and Appling are apparently out, some Republicans feel Norblad is the

next best man to tackle Morse. But they add frankly it would take Norblad's toughest campaign and a formidable mustering of support to beat him.

Speculators say 1982 could be the crossroads for Norblad. They note that with the end of his current two-year term, he will have 16 years in Congress, entitling him to full federal retirement of \$1,000 per month. He has also had his eye on the governorship in the past.

Appling can run for higher office in 1982 without losing his job as secretary of state because he will be in the middle of his four-year term.

One of Appling's major targets in state government — Atty. Gen. Robert Y. Thornton — is in that position too. The Democrat was swept into his third term at attorney general last November while Appling easily won the secretary's post.

Thornton tried to unseat Norblad in 1980 and didn't do too badly in a strong Republican district although he lost by 17,061 votes. Since then the picture has changed and the GOP margin in the district is down considerably.

An Appling-Thornton showdown would jar the political stumps.

If Norblad decides to "play it safe" in 1982, the specu-

Bank Debits Show Decline in Area

Bank debits for three southwestern Oregon counties dropped by 10.2 per cent last month compared to December, 1980, and 5 per cent compared to one year ago, according to the bureau of business research at the University of Oregon.

The debits in Jackson, Josephine and Curry counties totaled \$84,298,841 last month, it was stated. One year ago the amount totaled \$88,743,260.

Bank debits represent the dollar value of checks drawn against the deposit accounts of individuals and business firms.

tion is that Appling will sit tight and see how the wars go before he has to make a decision — in 1984.

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