

to the editor

Mine safety

Reference is made to an article dealing with health and safety in coal mines (SN: 3/22, p. 278).

We sincerely believe that the two bills introduced by the United Mine Workers are by far the strongest bills before Congress. The legislative history of the Congress of the United States reveals that the United Mine Workers have been appearing before various Congressional committees for more than 30 years seeking effective legislation. In almost all these cases, we have stood alone, and arrayed against us have been the entire coal industry and various other organizations and individuals. On one occasion, the director of the Federal Bureau of Mines was also in opposition.

The Federal Bureau of Mines has prepared and sent to Congress three different bills for two Administrations. Our bills were prepared and introduced on one occasion. Several features of our bill dealing with safety were not included in the first two Government bills, but are now included in its third bill.

We are quite surprised to see in the Government's third bill the retention of the state plan arrangement which was not included in its first two bills. The Federal Bureau of Mines and the United Mine Workers have been violently opposed to the state plan arrangement, because it gives to the states that join the plan the right to exercise certain veto power over the Federal Coal Mine Safety Act. State plan arrangements under our bill would no longer be in existence. The Government, in support of its right under its bill to change health and safety standards, argues that this is necessary due to the great technological changes taking place in the industry.

The Federal Bureau of Mines knows as we know that the great changes in

methods of mining that took place in the industry occurred between 1948 and 1955. We are mining coal now in the same manner in which we mined coal 14 years ago, and we venture to predict that we will be mining coal in the same manner for the next 14 years.

It is not a foregone conclusion when health and safety standards are changed at the whim of the Secretary of the Interior or the director of the Bureau of Mines that this will represent improvement. Certainly, anything that can be improved can also be eroded and for that reason we prefer to take our chances with the Congress.

We do not believe that the 4.5 milligrams of respirable dust in a cubic meter of air will represent much improvement in protecting miners from coal workers' pneumoconiosis. We know that there are many mines in this country that are presently meeting this standard. Our bill dealing with dust is much stronger than the Government bill.

In appearing before a House committee considering the various bills on the subject, President W. A. Boyle said, "The introduction of two bills, one dealing with health and one dealing with safety, represents our best judgment; however, we are not wedded to the two-bill principle. We want strong legislation in both of these areas. Our judgment in this matter is based upon more than 30 years before Congress and more than 75 years before legislatures of the coal-producing states."

*Lewis E. Evans, Director
Safety Division
United Mine Workers of America
Washington, D.C.*

Bodies for education

Re: the importance of willing bodies to Medical School for research and educational purposes.

Not enough publicity is given to this important subject in the medical press nor in scientific and literary journals

(See p. 546)

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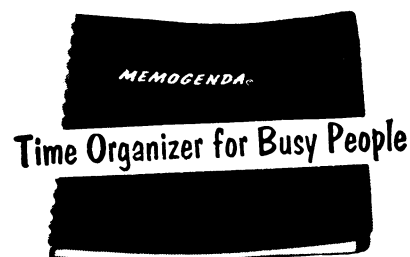
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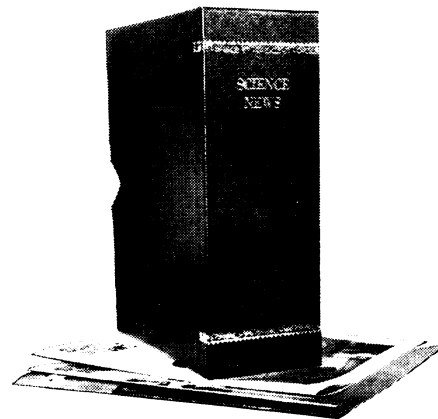
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