

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT
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THE MINERS HAVE A CASE ON SAFETY

The Bureau of Mines is an agency in the Department of Interior. It has a variety of functions including the inspections of coal mines and the recommendation of safety measures and instructions in rescue work. When Congress passed the Federal Safety Act in 1941, it was estimated that mine inspection work would require 250 inspectors. Accordingly, in 1941, the Bureau asked for 250. The Budget officer for the Interior Department cut it back to 144. The Budget Bureau, through which all estimates for funds must be cleared cut it back to 107. In 1945 and again in 1946, the sub-committee which handles this matter in Congress added 50 inspectors, making the total number 157. The Bureau of Mines has from time to time requested additional inspectors, but each time it was refused by the Budget Bureau at the White House. Consequently the Director of the Bureau of Mines had his hands tied and was not permitted to request a larger number when he appeared before Congress.

THE INTERIOR APPROPRIATION BILL FOR 1947

In recent weeks, when the appropriation bill for the Interior Department came before Congress, the author of the Congressional Front offered an amendment to increase the funds for mine inspection work by \$305,000. That amount would provide an additional 47 inspectors. The House approved that amendment. It went to the Senate and was stricken from the Bill by the Senate Appropriations Committee. It was later restored on the Senate floor. It is now in the Bill and if the President signs it, the Bureau of Mines will get the additional inspectors.

THE CASE FOR SAFETY.

In the last 14 years, 17,500 miners were killed in the soft coal industry. In the last 14 years, 855,000 miners were injured in the soft coal industry. There are probably 450,000 soft coal miners in the entire country. This means that in 14 years, the number of men injured in one way or another is twice the whole number of miners in this entire industry. The number of men killed in the last 14 years is equal to a full military division in the Army. These are authentic figures from the Bureau of Mines and indicate that peace has its hazards no less than war. Here is the proof that coal mining is hard and hazardous work and that we still have a long way to go to minimize the hazards and protect life.

A COMPARISON.

Each year, Congress provides 5 million to eliminate tuberculosis in cattle so that the health and lives of children and others may be protected. Each year, Congress provides 9 million for meat inspection to safeguard public health. Each year Congress provides nearly 3½ million for the enforcement of the Pure Food and Drug Act to protect life and health. Each year, Congress provides funds for cancer research, for quarantine and a host of other things in the interest of life and health. As we re-examine the casualty list in the coal mines of the nation, I am sure that the people will want additional steps taken to safeguard the lives and health of those who dig the coal that is so indispensable to our economic well-being.