

John Sullivan, who inspected the mine in 1889, found that ventilation was very poor. The mine was so extensively worked that one current of air was unsatisfactory for operation. However, at this time there was a great deal of friction between employers and employees, and little attention was given to remedying defects within the mine. Assurance was offered that conditions would be improved within a reasonable period of time, but no action was taken. During Sullivan's next inspection he found that conditions were still unsatisfactory, air was bad, and crosscuts were blocked. The mineowners would not abandon an area that was still productive even though it was menaced by fire. The miners told Sullivan that the "boss" had not visited these areas more than once a month.

The greatest problems during the decade of the 1880's were in the field of labor relations. There was a persistent attempt to drive the Chinese from all places of employment in Washington Territory, and the miners joined in with this opposition. As early as 1876 John McKnight told his wife:

The miners at the Seattle (Newcastle) mine drove all the Chinamen (about 40) away from there Saturday last. I will send for you as soon as I possibly can, but I must say that I don't like the looks of this place so far, and I'm afraid you won't either...

Chinese workmen became the focal point of the labor problems in 1885. On September 11 some masked white men, fully armed, set fire to the building occupied by the Chinese at the Coal Creek mine, thoroughly frightening the Chinese and completely destroying the building. Superintendent Watkins of the Oregon Improvement Company, which owned the structure, stated that the total damage was \$3,965.12. Average loss to the Chinese was \$50.00, and the firm of Wa Chong and Company lost furniture and clothing valued at \$1,506.12.

Early in January, 1889, rioting broke out once more, and an exchange of shots resulted in the death of one man and the injury of several others. The Knights of Labor and the Miners' Union had been in disagreement for some time. Their troubles came to a head when Hobart W. McNeil, the new manager for the Oregon Improvement Company, was confronted with a committee of nine men from the Knights of Labor who advised him that they would use force to stop work at the mine unless he complied with their demands to reinstate the rioters. McNeil would not concede.

That same day the known riot leaders were seen leaving town, presumably seeking arms and ammunition. Fearing that there would be more incidents endangering life and property, McNeil sought out the town sheriff, but that official, who was sympathetic with the Knights of Labor, and conveniently disappeared. McNeil asked for help from county and territorial officials, but got no answer. His last resort was U.S. Marshal T.J. Hamilton who, following the common corporation practice of deputizing private guards for the purpose of keeping the peace, called in a group of men to serve as a law-enforcing body as well as to guard the United States mails and government property. These so-called "detectives" came up from Portland, Oregon, and had the reputation of being organized mercenaries with criminal or questionable backgrounds.

Hamilton's action greatly incensed the local officials and aroused

Governor Eugene Semple to declare that such a force was unauthorized by law. There followed an exchange of charges and counter-charges among officials. Finally Governor Semple sent a report to U.S. Attorney-General A.H. Garland in Washington, D.C., requesting official disapproval. Meanwhile the detectives were stationed at Newcastle with orders to guard United States property only, but there was some indication that they had been hired to frighten the striking coal miners.

The situation became so involved that an examiner from the Department of Justice was sent out to investigate. His findings were that (1) the fears of the company and the majority of the miners were well founded, since serious disturbance and probable loss of property and life were imminent; (2) no aid had been offered by county or state authorities; (3) the post office was located in the company store and the acting postmaster was a company employee; (4) the need for protection of this property and the safety of the mails had been made known to Hamilton, who had checked with higher officials to determine whether he was authorized to appoint deputy marshals; and (5) the only complaint came from the Knights of Labor. Evidently the rest of the town feared the rioting Knights of Labor more than they did the illegal martial law. Frank B. Crosthwaite, the examiner, believed that the marshal had acted in good faith and was convinced that there was ample reason for immediate action. He also felt that jealousy between territorial and national officials might have some bearing on the problem.

The incensed parties calmed down after awhile, and when Governor Semple sent Lt. Colonel Gwin Hicks to check on the situation, he found that the detectives had been to Roslyn, and that "those remaining in Newcastle were there in the capacity of watchmen employed by the coal company." The citizens of the town seemed definitely happier with this situation. The result was that Newcastle became a national headline. Here was certain proof that life in such a camp was one of dispute, quarreling, and violence.

Doubtless the local justice of the peace, like the sheriff, saw the less happy side of life at Newcastle. Certainly many cases of violence and theft were brought before him. Assault and battery, using fists and rocks, lanterns and "deadly weapons" (perhaps "with intent to kill"), were very common. Fines varied from \$10.00 to \$500, depending on the seriousness of the charge. The only way to collect bills, it seems, was through the justice's office; so the company, the saloon-keeper, the butcher, the boardinghouses manager, came to court to collect sums due, whether \$5.00 or \$100. Petty larceny was common. One night the company store lost a pair of gloves, two cans of sardines, \$3.00, and four railroad tickets, all of which were found in the cabin of the accused. Chickens, pocketknives, and clothing were stolen, and attempts were made to recover them. Husbands and wives brought their troubles into court. Usually the women fearing beating, abuse, and "grievous bodily injury," and demanded in court that the husband furnish bond to good behavior or serve out a sentence in the county jail.

Sometimes the judge may have smiled inwardly. Sarah Conroy assaulted Mary Barrett "by words", calling her a whore, and was deemed guilty as charged. Thomas Mullarkey threw a quart of beer over Peter Heisenberger and spoiled his clothes. Three men assaulted a Justice of the Peace without provocation, and each was fined \$500.