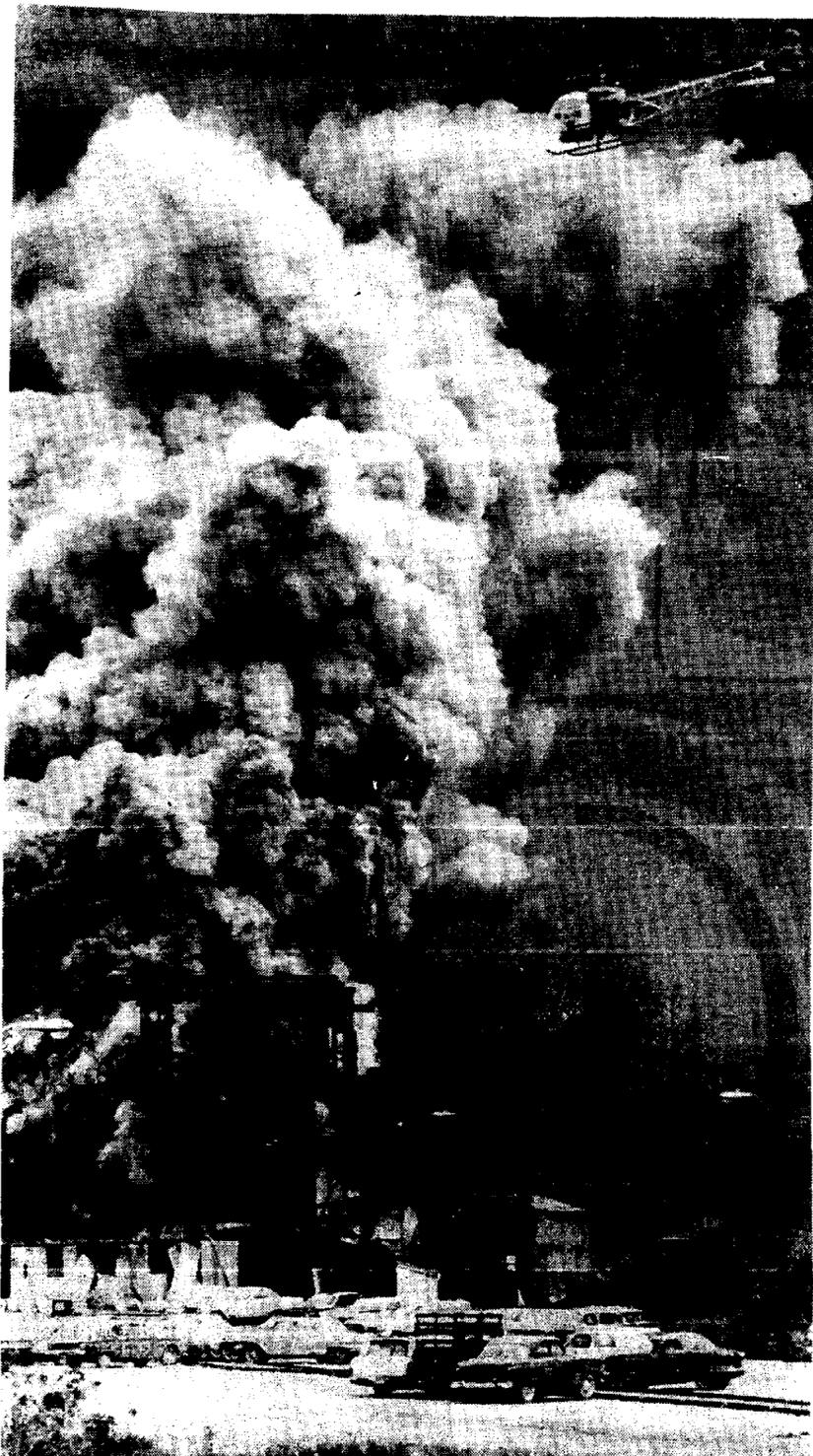


The Charleston Gazette

The State Newspaper

Charleston, West Virginia, Thursday Morning, November 21, 1968

56 Pages—4 Sections—Ten Cents—VALLEY EDITION



BILLOWING SMOKE rises from the Llewellyn portal of the Mountaineer Coal Company's No. 9 mine. Shattered tippie is

shown above parking lot. A helicopter hovers above the disaster scene. Cars in the foreground belong to the trapped miners. (Staff Photo by Lawrence Pierce)

'No Chance' Given 78 Trapped Miners

By James A. Haught
Staff Writer

MANNINGTON—Rescue prospects dimmed late Wednesday for the 78 men now known to be trapped deep in a smoke-filled coal mine rocked by explosions earlier in the day.

The miners are believed to have died about dawn Wednesday when an underground explosion shook the earth for 20 miles and erupted into the sky like a volcano.

Twenty-one other miners, working in distant tunnels, managed to escape to the surface before fire spread inside the mine. But 78 still were missing in the flaming catacombs Wednesday night.

"There's not a chance in the world to get those men out," West Virginia Department of Mines inspector Leslie Ryan said in midafternoon as he viewed the mile-high column of smoke rolling from the burning mine.

Just before midnight, a pocket of gas developed behind one of the openings which had been sealed and blew it open. The opening had been shut off in an effort to control air intake into the mine and help subdue the fire.

Earlier, rescue workers had said chances of finding the men alive were "very doubtful... very grave."

Scene of the tragedy is the huge No. 9 mine of Mountaineer Division of Consolidation Coal Co. The mine lies beneath Farmington, Mannington, and nearby 24 square miles of Marion County just west of Fairmont. It is an old mine, opened in the 1940s, but it had been modernized to exploit its rich seam of six-to-eight-foot-high coal. Production was 9,400 tons a day.

MAIN ENTRANCE of the mine is on W. Va. 15 at a tiny town called "Consol No. 9, unincorporated." But the center of the explosion was about seven miles away, somewhere in the 600-foot deep labyrinth of tunnels under Llewellyn Run west of Mannington.

"Consol" official Leonard Grose of Morgantown, formerly of Charleston, said about 100 men were at work in the mine on the midnight shift early Wednesday. Most of them were in the newer section near Llewellyn Run.

Between 5:30 and 5:40 a. m., a thunderous blast went off deep in the earth. The elevator of the well-like Llewellyn Run

couple of hours and pounded on the pipes and yelled and finally made contact."

Others who emerged from more distant entrances weren't injured. In fact, one of them, Charles Biafore of Fairmont, said he had been operating a noisy mining machine about six miles from the explosion and didn't even know there had been a blast until others told him to flee the mine. Altogether, 21 men came out safely.

CONSOL EXECUTIVE Vice President William Poundstone of Pittsburgh held a press conference Wednesday afternoon for dozens of West Virginia and national newsmen who flocked to the scene. He said it is presumed that natural gas, methane (Please Turn to Page 4 Col. 6)

Other stories and pictures are on Pages 49, 56.

shaft was hurled into the sky like a shot from a cannon. Sections of concrete from the shaft entrance were thrown onto nearby cars, smashing one of them. The modern Llewellyn Run portal, built only last year as part of a \$1 million improvement program by Consol subsidiary Mountaineer Coal Co., was destroyed. Flame and smoke began to rise from the shaft. A parked car was set afire. The smoke grew steadily thicker until the scene looked like an erupting volcano.

Shock of the explosion was felt 10 miles away in Fairmont. C & P Telephone Co. official William Withrow said his house shook as he was dressing for work, and he said other Fairmont residents also reported feeling the tremor.

Stragglers began emerging from the mine. Eight men who had been working about two miles from the blast linked hands and groped their way to an air hole. After nearly two hours they made contact with men on the surface and were hoisted to safety by a crane with a scoop bucket attached.

"I HELPED LOAD them into ambulances," Charles Priestley Jr. of Farmington said. "They were sick and vomiting, and two of them were bleeding from the eyes. The concussion from a blast down in the mines does that to you."

The eight men were taken to Fairmont General Hospital where they revived quickly. Only three were admitted for observation. One of the eight, George Wilson, recounted:

"... The power went off and we could tell by the swishing of the air and the dust that there had been an explosion... All the men were made sick by dust and carbon monoxide fumes... We yelled to each other and decided to go to the air shaft where we thought we had a better chance of being rescued. We were down there for a



MAP locates Mannington, where explosions rumbled through a coal mine Wednesday. (AP Wirephoto)

NOSY REPORTER

Prison Employee Quits After Call

By Don Marsh
Staff Writer

A penitentiary employee who was holding a job for which he had no apparent qualifications resigned Wednesday a few hours after a reporter made an inquiry about his status.

James E. Walker, a former employe of the Department of Motor Vehicles, was placed on the penitentiary's payroll Oct. 28 as supervisor of food service. His salary was \$650 a month.

Warden Ira Coiner said Walker was employed in Charleston by the office of Institutions Commissioner Clarence Johnson.

Coiner said he knew of no training or experience Walker had which would have qualified him to be chief of food service for the penitentiary.

Coiner added, however, that Walker's actual job was in the business office. "He was sort of in training to become business manager," he said.

The warden said Walker came to his office Wednesday afternoon and told him he was quitting effective immediately. Coiner said he gave no reason.

A reporter had asked state officials Wednesday morning if Walker were on the payroll and if they knew of anything in his background involving food service.

There was no apparent connection between the questions and Walker's resignation, but Coiner said, "I've sort of been expecting your call."

WALKER, WHOSE permanent address is Crab Orchard, Raleigh County, worked in the Department of Motor Vehicles from 1961 until last May.

Motor Vehicles Commissioner James Kay Thomas said Walker's resignation was offered and accepted. At the time he left, he was in charge of the operators and chauffeurs license division.

Foe Batters U.S. Camp, Three Cities

SAIGON (AP) — Enemy rockets and mortars hit three provincial capitals, a U.S. Army division headquarters and an American airfield overnight in a continuing campaign of attacks by fire across South Vietnam, the allied commands said Thursday.

Two Vietnamese civilians were reported to have been killed and 27 wounded in two mortar barrages that hit the town of Hoi An, 15 miles south of Da Nang. The U.S. Command said. "Initial reports indicate most of the wounded were Vietnamese school children."

There were no reports of significant ground fighting across the country.

There have been reports that part of an understanding that led to a bombing halt over North Vietnam included a provision that shellings of populated centers in the South would halt. North Vietnam has denied this, saying the decision to halt the bombing of the North was unconditional.

Briefly

STATE FORECAST—Partly cloudy. High 38 to 44. Details on Page 4.

Czechs

PRAGUE (AP) — Czechoslovak students announced Wednesday night they will end at noon today their massive protest sit-ins against loss of freedoms in this Soviet-occupied country.

The action followed an appeal by Czechoslovak leaders to the students "to stop in time the danger which is threatening us."

Money

BONN, Germany (AP) — The future of the French franc and perhaps other Western currencies hung in the balance Wednesday at an emergency meeting of the men who run treasuries and central banks of the world's 10 wealthiest nations.

Most major money markets were shut to check speculators' attacks on the franc and rising pressure against the dollar and the pound in the second international monetary crisis of 1968.

Sea Battle

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Two Venezuelan warships fired on a Cuban vessel fleeing in Venezuelan waters and captured the boat and its crew, Venezuela's armed forces chief said Wednesday.

'WISH DAWN WASN'T MARRYING A BAPTIST'

Sex Changed, Writer Plans to Wed Negro

By Al Lanier
CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) — Writer Gordon Langley Hall, adopted son of Dame Margaret Rutherford, has changed his sex through an operation and is planning to marry a South Carolina Negro man — with the approval of most of his British family.

One of the few reservations, says the new Miss Dawn Langley Hall, is that of a great aunt, who commented: "I do wish Dawn wasn't marrying a Baptist."

Dame Margaret, the famed British character actress who brought Agatha Christie's beloved Miss Marple to the screen, couldn't have been more pleased at the news.

Reached at her country cottage at Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, she said happily: "We had three adoptive sons and an adoptive daughter, but now we have two of each."

Miss Hall, who as Gordon Langley Hall wrote biographies of Jacqueline Kennedy and of Mrs. Lyndon Johnson and her daughters, says the news has not been received so joyfully in

Charleston's top society, in which Gordon Langley Hall the man once moved freely. "The operation hasn't fazed them," she said, "but my proposed marriage has stunned the city."

MISS HALL, was interviewed in her early 19th century home on Society Street, surrounded by sleeping dogs, 19th century furniture and her husband-to-be, John Paul Simmons, and his sister, Mildred.

Miss Hall, as Gordon Langley Hall, was society editor for the Nevada Mo. Daily Mail for about a year several years ago.

Simmons, a former \$32,500-a-week garage mechanic and one of 11 children of a retired Navy shipyard worker, said he is 22. Miss Hall gave her age as 31, but London sources put it at 39.

The dark-haired, rather angular Miss Hall said her operation was performed at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore after she began to develop female characteristics. Hormone treatments completed the sex change, she said.

In Baltimore, a Johns Hopkins spokesman said in response to a query, "Miss Hall was a patient. Miss Hall underwent surgery." He would not comment further.

Miss Hall said she and Simmons "are already married by common law" and had planned a ceremony Dec. 1 at a Negro Baptist church where his father is a deacon. But they dropped that plan, she said, after threats that the church would be bombed.

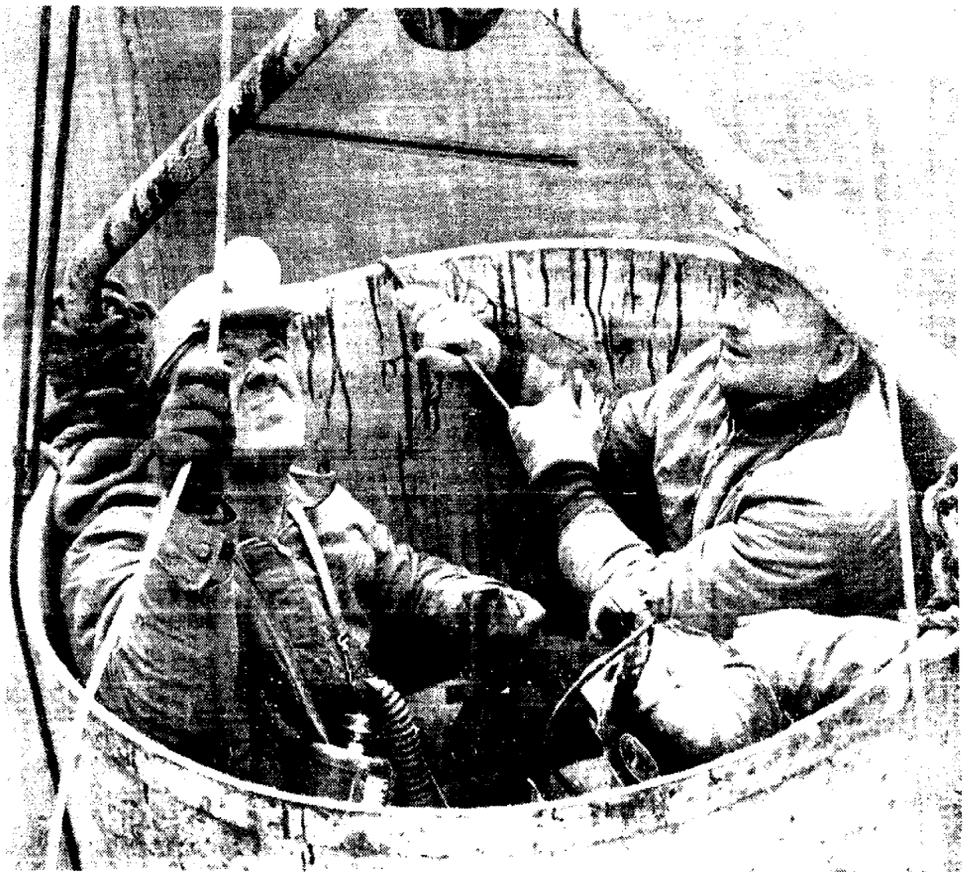
Instead, they will have an Anglican wedding in England, she said. Dame Margaret said in Buckinghamshire that she and her husband, actor Stringer Davis, would "do our best to attend."

"We loved Dawn as a man and we love the woman very dearly," said Dame Margaret. "She has been a part of our lives for a very long time."

Davis said Simmons "seems

to be just about as good a steward in charge of affairs as Dawn could find," adding: "And he has given her every possible

consolation and comfort in what must have been a long and difficult time for both of them. It (Please Turn to Page 4 Col. 1)



RESCUED MINERS approach the surface in a bucket hoist from the burning No. 9 mine of the Mountaineer

Coal Co. at Mannington. More than 70 other miners were trapped below. (AP Wirephoto)

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Miss Dawn Hall
One Reservation

Problems of Aging Attention Pressed

By Edward Peeks
Staff Writer

A federal official suggested here Wednesday that rural older Americans should organize to deal "with all the problems of the aging, not merely poverty problems."

"Since the older poor have more problems than their more prosperous contemporaries, those problems would get more attention," said Richard M. Hausler, deputy administrator of the Rural Electrification Administration.

Such organization, he said, is needed to deal with the problems facing "the old Negroes of Southside Virginia, the old examiners of Appalachia and the poor farmers throughout the area."

Hausler, a native of Appalachia, said of the old farmer in the region, "The politicians, preachers and the mine owners all of his life have used him and molded his hates and fears, but they leave him alone now, using machines where they once used his muscle, seeking votes more in the towns and cities than up the hollows and down the backroads."

"Many of those who used and molded him have become more moderate to adjust to the times, or their more moderate sons have taken over, leaving that old fellow and his wife alone with beliefs as out of date as his skills and shack," he added.

Hausler made the observation in a prepared speech for delivery Wednesday night at a banquet sponsored by the regional conference of the National Council on the Aging at the Daniel Boone Hotel.

HE SUGGESTED that the sponsors of organized older Americans should be the extension service of the U. S. Agriculture Department, rural electric co-ops, churches and "the individual in the community with time on his hands and warmth in his heart."

Hausler said that the elderly "want to help others and themselves even if hard experience has made overt gesture difficult."

The general war on poverty is not a failure and the national effort will continue, said the former OEO officials.

"Some may urge easier methods, particularly trickle down methods," Hausler said. "They will find, though, that they are not fighting press releases out of OEO, but millions of realities—and even more—millions of people like you who have seen firsthand what is happening."

The conference registered 250 representatives from eight states for the four-day meeting of workshops and discussions on problems facing older Americans.

William E. Oriol, staff director of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, will discuss legislation at the final morning session today.

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Hospital Run Fatal to Kin Of Patient

BUFFALO — An ambulance carrying a woman who had swallowed poison to Thomas Memorial Hospital in South Charleston crashed into a bridge about here early Wednesday, killing a passenger and injuring the driver.

State Trooper T. G. Yoho said Paul Crump, 61, of Buffalo, was dead on arrival at the hospital with head injuries.

Yoho said Crump was the brother-in-law of Mrs. Ida Whittington, 50, of Buffalo, who had earlier swallowed the poison at her home.

The hospital listed Mrs. Whittington in critical condition as result of the poison. She was not injured in the crash, police said.

The injured ambulance driver was identified by Yoho as 30-year-old Paul Shannon, a part time employe of Raynes Funeral Home here.

The hospital said Shannon was admitted with a broken arm and broken hip.

Yoho said the ambulance hit the concrete abutment of the bridge that spans Scary Creek on U. S. 17 near the Kanawha County line.

Yoho said it was his understanding that Crump found Mrs. Whittington in her home and rushed her to the funeral home in his car.

Race Track Case Figure Surrenders

CHARLES TOWN — (AP) — Frank Benson of Washington, wanted by federal authorities in connection with conspiracy charges stemming from race track earnings, turned himself in Wednesday to U. S. Commissioner Henry Morrow.

Benson and one other man, Harry Pickman of Brooklyn, N.Y., were being sought Wednesday following the arrests of 12 other men Tuesday.

All 14 were accused of conspiring to evade payment of federal income tax and failing to pay 10 per cent taxes on earnings at Shennandoah Downs race track here above \$600.

A hearing has been scheduled for Nov. 25 in U. S. District Court at Elkins, W. Va., before Judge Robert E. Maxwell.

Class Planned In Self-Defense

Weekend self-defense classes will be inaugurated Sunday afternoon at the North Charleston Recreation Center.

The new series of classes will begin at 2:30 p.m. Sunday to accommodate Charlestonians who find it difficult to attend weekday classes held each Thursday from 7-9 p.m.

The self-defense classes have graduated about 200 students since they began last winter. In addition to the Thursday and Sunday class sessions, the Charleston Park and Recreation Commission also sponsors special Monday night classes for nurses.

Payoff Told By Executive Of Pipeline

NEWARK, N. J. — (AP) — A corporate vice president was granted immunity from prosecution Wednesday to testify about a \$10,000 payoff his company allegedly made to the former mayor and council president of Woodbridge.

The witness was Glenn H. Giles of the Colonial Pipeline Co. of Atlanta, Ga.

The federal government charges that former Mayor Walter Zirpolo and former Township Council President Robert E. Jacks accepted \$10,000 in bribes from Colonial in connection with construction of a 2,600-mile oil pipeline from Houston, Tex., to Linden, N. J.

Simon Rifkind, attorney for Ben D. Leuty, president of Colonial, told the jury earlier that Leuty made payoffs to Zirpolo and Jacks when he realized any delay in the pipeline construction could cost his company \$100,000 a day.

Leuty is charged with bribery and conspiracy in the case.

Sex Changed

(Continued From Page 1)
was a very wonderful thing."

Miss Hall said despite the attitude of her former Charleston friends, she and her husband plan to return here after their marriage early next year and "live in peace and dignity."

"I WAS SICK and now I'm well," she added, John Paul and I are happy."

In her previous life as Gordon Langley Hall, Dawn was the author of "Lady Bird and Her Daughters," published by the Macrae Smith Co. last year, and "Jacqueline Kennedy," written in collaboration with Ann Pinchot and published by Frederick Fell Inc.

Earlier works included "Princess Margaret," "The Gypsy Contessa," "Golden Boats From Burma," "The Sawdust Trail" and "Mr. Jefferson's Ladies."

UNICEF Increases Relief to Nigeria

UNITED NATIONS, N. Y. — (AP) — The director of the U. N. Children's Fund, Henry R. Labouisse, announced allocation of another \$1.5 million for families on both sides of the line in the Nigerian civil war.

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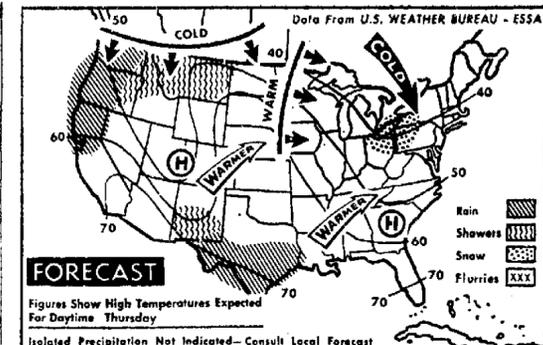
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The Weather HERE AND ELSEWHERE

Thursday, Nov. 21, 1968

Sunrise 7:19 a.m.
Sunset 5:07 p.m.
Moon sets 6:00 p.m.

FORECASTS
CHARLESTON — Partly cloudy, not as cold. High 43. Fair at night. Low 27.
WEST VIRGINIA — Partly cloudy. High 38 to 44.
VIRGINIA — Sunny with some clouds over the mountains. High 40 to 46 in the mountains and 44 to 50 east of the mountains.
OHIO — Variable cloudiness northeast and partly cloudy elsewhere. High in the 30s except lower 40s locally extreme south.

WEDNESDAY'S TEMPERATURES
7 a.m. 28 3 p.m. 28
9 a.m. 28 5 p.m. 29
11 a.m. 28 7 p.m. 29
1 p.m. 27 9 p.m. 29

WEDNESDAY'S HUMIDITIES
5 a.m. 85 11 a.m. 85
5 p.m. 85 11 p.m. 70

WEDNESDAY'S WIND
Highest 13 m.p.h. from W. at 3 p.m.

SNOW

is expected to continue today over the lower Lakes region and the upper Ohio Valley. Rain is forecast for the Western Gulf and Northwest. (AP Wirephoto)

State Road Bond Sale Is Seen Next Week

The Associated Press

State Treasurer John H. Kelly predicted Wednesday West Virginia will be able to sell \$20 million in road bonds next week within the 4½ per cent interest limit despite the steady rise in bond market interest rates in recent years.

"I think we'll be under it," Kelly said.

Bids on the bonds, the fifth \$20 million package to be marketed under a \$200 million road bond authorization voted in the 1964 election, will be opened Tuesday in Gov. Hulett C. Smith's office.

The 1964 constitutional amendment authorized the legislature to vote issuance of up to \$20 million in road bonds each fiscal year for 10 years. The legislature placed a ceiling of 4½ per cent as the state's net interest cost.

Net interest costs at which the four previous packages were marketed were 3.12 per cent in April 1965, 3.42 per cent in November 1965, 3.75 per cent in November 1966 and 4.25 per cent in November 1967.

Despite this continuing rise toward 4½ per cent, Kelly said he expected the state would be able to market all the remaining issues without lifting the ceiling, which could be done by the legislature.

"I think the money market will get better after January," Kelly said.

Voters approved Nov. 5 an additional \$350 million road bond authorization.

Unlike the 1964 authorization, the new one does not restrict the amount of bonds sold at one time. The legislature is free to sell the entire issue at once or in installments of any size.

So far, no interest ceiling has been placed on bond sales under the 1968 amendment.

Based on present estimates of State Road Commission needs, Kelly said he expected the state to put about \$70 million in road bonds on the market next year. This would include a sixth \$20 million installment under the 1964 amendment and \$50 million worth under the 1968 authorization.

If the 1964 amendment had not restricted the amount of the total package sold in one year, the whole \$200 million in bonds could have been, in effect, interest-free, Kelly said.

He explained the bonds could have been sold at the comparatively low rates prevailing in 1965, when two installments went for 3.12 per cent and 3.42 per cent.

Same Mine Killed Father Of Survivor

MANNINGTON — (AP) — Among the 21 miners rescued Wednesday from the Mountaineer Coal Co. No. 9 mine near here was Matt Menas Jr., whose father died in a similar disaster in the same mine 14 years ago.

The explosion on Nov. 13, 1954, killed 16 men. The mine at that time was owned by the Jamison Coal Co., and was called the Jamison No. 9.

Here is a list of the other miners rescued Wednesday, all of whom are from the area around Mannington, Fairmont and Farmington:

1. Byron Jones.
2. Nathaniel Stephens, 46.
3. Charles Biafore.
4. Nick Kose, 23.
5. Roy Wilson.
6. James Herron.
7. Paul Sabo.
8. Walter Slavikosky.
9. Henry Conaway.
10. Nezer Vandergriff, 48.
11. Ralph Starkey, 41.
12. Lewis Lake, 53.
13. George Wilson, 54.
14. Alva Davis, 29.
15. Raymond Parker.
16. Robert Bland.
17. Robert Mullen.
18. Gary Martin.
19. Charles Crumm.
20. Brad Hillberry.

JAY, WIFE GAVE \$8,500 IN CAMPAIGN

Jay Rockefeller apparently felt strongly about the election of gubernatorial candidate James M. Sprouse.

Records filed with the secretary of state's office showed Wednesday that Rockefeller made a \$5,000 contribution to Sprouse's personal campaign fund and that his wife, Sharon Rockefeller, contributed \$3,500 to the State Democratic Executive Committee.

Rockefeller was the only Democratic candidate for a Board of Public Works position who was recorded as contributing to the Sprouse campaign.

In his post election statement, Sprouse reported that he received \$9,000 in contributions and spent \$4,000.

The state committee reported it received \$283,294.82 in contributions and spent \$353,191.71 — a deficit of \$69,896.89.

'No Chance' Given 78 Trapped Miners

(Continued From Page 1)

ane, caused the explosion. He said the mine always had been "moderately gassy," as are many mines in Marion County, an oil and gas region.

Estimates of how many men were missing varied throughout the day, but at a late afternoon press conference a coal company spokesman said the number had been determined to be 78.

If all 78 of the missing men are dead, it will be the worst mine disaster in West Virginia since Jan. 10, 1940, when 91 were killed in a coal mine blast at Bartley, McDowell County.

The worst mine disaster in U. S. history happened only about 10 miles from the site of Wednesday's blast. On Dec. 6, 1907, the lives of 361 men and

boys were snuffed out by a mine explosion at Monongah, Marion County.

The ill-fated Consol No. 9 mine was hit by another gas explosion on Nov. 13, 1954, that killed 16 miners. The mine was set afire by that blast, too, and it had to be filled with foam and sealed for a year until the smoldering stopped. A granite monument to the 1954 victims sits beside a church in Farmington.

ONLY LAST week, a gas explosion and fire destroyed the Maechin store and adjoining buildings in Farmington, killing three customers and a clerk.

"Some of the volunteer firemen who fought the fire at my dad's store were among the miners trapped in the mine this morning," State Farmers Home Administration Director A. here."

Governor's Fund Shifted For Health

Gov. Hulett C. Smith said Wednesday he has transferred \$11,000 from the state's contingency fund to the state Health Department to support new uniform medical licensing procedures.

The Medical Licensing Board earlier switched to the new methods of examining physicians before they can practice in the state but the cost per examination rose from \$25 to \$65.

Smith's transfer will help defray the added expense temporarily but Health Director Dr. N. H. Dyer said he would ask the next legislature for adequate funds to pay for the new testing methods.

James Manchin said Wednesday. "We have a lot of misery up here."

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