

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Madam Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

□ 1615

RECOGNIZING THE TRAGIC LOSS OF LIFE THAT OCCURRED AT THE CHERRY MINE IN CHERRY, ILLINOIS

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 752) recognizing the tragic loss of life that occurred at the Cherry Mine in Cherry, Illinois, on its 100th anniversary and the contributions to worker and mine safety that resulted from this and other disasters, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 752

Whereas the St. Paul Mine Company Mine in Cherry, a town in Bureau County, Illinois, began operation in 1905;

Whereas the mine supplied the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad with 300,000 tons of coal annually for its locomotives;

Whereas coal remains an abundant source of energy in Illinois and across the country;

Whereas the majority of Cherry miners were immigrants working to achieve the American dream;

Whereas 490 men and boys were working in the mine on Saturday, November 13, 1909;

Whereas 10 of the Cherry miners were boys under the age of 16, including one who was 15 years old, were hired illegally;

Whereas United Mine Workers represented miners at the Cherry Mine in 1909 and continue to represent workers throughout the United States and Canada;

Whereas according to the Mine Safety and Health Administration, there were 2,642 coal mining fatalities in the United States in 1909;

Whereas the main and secondary shafts of the Cherry Mine contained wooden stairs and ladders;

Whereas an electrical outage at the Cherry Mine caused the workers to light kerosene lanterns and torches;

Whereas a torch caught fire 500 feet below the surface in the Cherry Mine;

Whereas the efforts to redirect the fire caused flammable material such as wood to ignite and rapidly spread the fire;

Whereas two shafts were closed to smother the fire;

Whereas the shaft closings cut off oxygen to the workers, and allowed "black damp", a mixture of deadly carbon dioxide and nitrogen to spread through the mine;

Whereas over 200 miners managed to make their way to the surface to escape the fire;

Whereas a group of miners, lead by John Bundy, showed incredible courage by journeying down the mine shaft 6 times to rescue their fellow miners;

Whereas on the seventh attempt the miners caught fire and burned to death;

Whereas a group of 21 miners, who later became known as the "eight-day men", sealed themselves from the fire;

Whereas the "eight-day men" exhibited behavior that can only be described as selfless when helping each other survive;

Whereas a team rescued these men after 8 grueling days underground in torturous conditions;

Whereas 259 miners, including 4 children, perished in what became known as the Great Cherry Mine Disaster;

Whereas the United Mine Workers pressed successfully for mine safety reforms following this and other disasters like it;

Whereas the United States Bureau of Mines was created in 1910 as a result of disasters like the Great Cherry Mine Disaster;

Whereas the State of Illinois reacted by passing stronger mine safety regulations;

Whereas those mine regulations included requiring mine owners to maintain firefighting equipment and require certain workers to pass safety tests;

Whereas the Illinois' Worker's Compensation Act of 1911 recognized the dangers that mine workers faced and continue to face today; and

Whereas November 13, 2009, marks the 100th anniversary of the Great Cherry Mine Disaster: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) honors the 259 miners lost in the tragedy known as the Great Cherry Mine Disaster on its 100th anniversary; and

(2) supports the important safety measures that were enacted as a result of this terrible incident and others around the country like it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. BISHOP) and the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Madam Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members may revise and extend and insert extraneous material on H. Res. 752 into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 752, memorializing the 100th anniversary of the Cherry Mine disaster of November 13, 1909, in Cherry, Illinois.

This landmark mine disaster, which took the lives of 259 men and children and left 600 grieving widows and orphans, should not be forgotten. I commend Representative HALVORSON for bringing this important chapter in labor history to the Nation's attention.

The fire began in the Cherry Mine after an electricity outage, when burning fuel from a makeshift torch dripped on an underground hay bale. With no firefighting equipment in the mine, workers tried to douse the flames with water from an underground mule stable. The flames grew and the timber structures lining the mine quickly ignited. Some diggers in the lower level

noticed the smoke and suggested to their supervisors that they get out. They were told to continue working. Other workers were reluctant to leave for fear of losing income as they were paid on a piecework basis. Company supervisors waited about an hour before making a systematic attempt to alert workers about the fire. Some of the immigrant workers spoke little English and could not understand the orders to evacuate. No fire drill had ever been practiced. At some point, the mine fan reversed, sucking flames further up the shaft. The ventilation system broke and the escape stairway was consumed in flames.

The 259 deaths from this 1909 mine disaster, coupled with 362 killed from the Monongah disaster in West Virginia in 1907, spurred Congress to create the Bureau of Mines in 1910 as a research agency. However, without enforcement powers, the bureau failed to produce significant changes.

In 1947, amidst fierce industry opposition, the bureau was finally given the power to inspect mines. A mine explosion in West Frankfort, Illinois, which took 119 lives, spurred Congress to give the Bureau of Mines the power to close mines for safety violations in 1951. Many more accidents followed until Congress created the Federal Coal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1969. That law requires quarterly mine inspections and authorized fines for violations.

In 2006, miner deaths soared to a 10-year high with disasters at Sago and Aracoma Mines in West Virginia and the Darby Mine in Kentucky. Congress responded by passing the Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act, the MINER Act, which requires mine operators to provide caches of air, have rescue teams organized, develop wireless communications, and install tracking systems to locate miners who are trapped underground.

This resolution also recognizes the pioneering work of the United Mine Workers in pressing successfully for mine safety reforms in the wake of the Cherry Mine disaster and other disasters like it.

It is often said that our mine safety laws had been written with the blood of miners. That is, it is only after horrific disasters like the Cherry Mine or Sago that progress is made because of the ensuing public outcry.

While improvements have been made in recent years, more work needs to be done to make sure miners return home safely to their families at the end of each shift. Preventable disasters still occur, like the tragic loss of life we saw at Crandall Canyon Mine in Utah in 2007. Although there have been nearly 100 years of effort in Congress since the Cherry Mine disaster to protect underground miners, this resolution reminds us that our work is far from over.

Madam Speaker, once again I express my support for H. Res. 752. I thank Representative HALVORSON for bringing

this forward. I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CASSIDY. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of House Resolution 752, recognizing the tragic loss of life that occurred at the Cherry Mine in Cherry, Illinois, on its 100th anniversary and the contributions to worker and mine safety that resulted from this and other disasters.

On November 13, 1909, 400 miners went to work at the Cherry Mine in Cherry, Illinois. This mine was one of the first to have electric lighting, but on the day of the disaster, the system was not working. Instead, miners were using torches to light their way. Mules were being used to bring coal to the mine elevator, and the hay to feed those mules provided the fuel that started the fire that ultimately killed 263 miners. Miraculously, 200 miners working that day escaped. Even more amazing, though, 21 miners survived for 8 days underground with no food and little water.

In order to suppress the fire, those above ground sealed the mine. Conditions below ground deteriorated rapidly. Led by mine manager George Eddy, the 21 miners who survived went into the recesses of the mine to escape the fire and seek good air. Ultimately, the miners barricaded themselves deep in the mine, attempting to block out the bad air. They were able to pool water from seepage in their shelter.

The tragedy of the Cherry Mine has sadly been repeated in one form or another throughout the history of mining. With this resolution, we honor those lost in the mine. We also honor those who demonstrated their courage and resolve in the face of the tragedy. Just as we see in today's miners, those trapped in the mine fought hard to stay alive. The men above ground did everything they could to put out the fire with the hope of saving their fellow workers.

I rise today to recognize the loss at the Cherry Mine and to honor those who work in our mines today. I ask my colleagues to support this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. HALVORSON), the sponsor of this legislation.

Mrs. HALVORSON. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 752, a resolution I introduced to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Great Cherry Mine Disaster.

The Great Cherry Mine Disaster was a tragic coal mining accident that took place in Cherry, Illinois, which is a small town in Bureau County in my district. House Resolution 752 recognizes the historical significance of this

mining accident, which led to the passage of landmark mine safety and worker safety legislation both in Illinois and at the Federal level.

I want to thank Chairman GEORGE MILLER and Ranking Member JOHN KLINE for bringing my resolution to the floor. And I also want to thank Calla Brown, Jody Calemine, and Richard Miller from the majority staff on Education and Labor for working with my staff on this resolution.

Madam Speaker, on Saturday, November 13, 1909, 419 employees of the St. Paul Mine Company showed up to work at the company's coal mine in Cherry. The majority of them were immigrants working to achieve the American Dream. Most were Italian or Slovenian, but others were German, Greek, French, Irish, and British. These workers were represented by the United Mine Workers of America.

In 1909, coal mining was an extremely dangerous line of work. In that year alone, there were 2,642 recorded coal mining fatalities in the United States. Two years earlier, coal mining disasters in West Virginia and Pennsylvania resulted in over 200 deaths. These deaths and disasters were often the result of inadequate workplace safety regulation, which was the case in Cherry.

On November 13, 1909, the workers at Cherry were using kerosene lanterns and torches because of an electric outage in the mine. About 500 feet below the surface, one of the torches ignited some flammable material and the fire spread rapidly. Two shafts were closed in an attempt to smother the fire, which cut off oxygen to many of the workers. The lack of oxygen created a mixture of carbon dioxide and nitrogen known as black damp, which made its way throughout the mine, suffocating many of the workers.

Two hundred of the miners quickly made their way to the surface, but the rest were trapped in the mine. One of the mine managers, a man named John Bundy, led a courageous group of miners back into the mine to rescue their fellow workers. On the seventh trip, Bundy and his rescue group caught fire and burned to death. Another group of 21 miners, who became known as the "eight-day men," managed to survive in the mine for 8 days before they were rescued. When the disaster was over, 259 miners had died, including four children.

The Great Cherry Mine Disaster was the third deadliest mine disaster in American history. The Great Cherry Mine Disaster and other similar mine disasters moved lawmakers to enact landmark mine safety and worker safety reforms. In 1910, the Illinois General Assembly passed legislation requiring mine operators to maintain fire-fighting equipment and certain mine workers to pass safety tests. Also that year, Congress passed legislation creating the U.S. Bureau of Mines. In 1911, Illinois enacted its first worker compensation law.

The United Mine Workers and organized labor played a very important role in pushing for these reforms. Over the last century, we have made great progress on mine safety, but we still have more work to do. We learned this the hard way with the tragic Sago Mine disaster in West Virginia in 2006, which killed 13 coal miners.

As we move forward, we need to continue to update and improve our Nation's mine safety laws. House Resolution 752 honors the memory of those who lost their lives in the Great Cherry Mine Disaster and recognizes the important mine safety reforms enacted as a result of this and similar disasters. As we look into the future, it's important that we always remember the important lessons of the past.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting House Resolution 752.

Mr. CASSIDY. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. BISHOP) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 752, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NATIONAL FAMILY LITERACY DAY

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 878) expressing support for the goals and ideals of National Family Literacy Day.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 878

Whereas National Family Literacy Day is held on November 1;

Whereas children spend 5 times as much time outside the classroom as they do in school, and a parent's education and income are 2 of the biggest factors in determining a child's success in school;

Whereas children who participate in family literacy programs demonstrate significant gains in oral language skills and score higher on standardized tests;

Whereas National Family Literacy Day encourages parents to become involved in their children's education and schoolwork;

Whereas approximately 8,000 literacy programs and schools will hold readings, workshops, book drives, and family activities at libraries and community centers across the country in honor of National Family Literacy Day; and

Whereas National Family Literacy Day highlights multigenerational learning, the importance of literacy for children and adults, and parental involvement in the education of their children: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—