



A conveyor belt carries the quartz up this bridge from the shaft-head to the battery. Here it is dropped into the bin shown in the right foreground.

clamber up a "rise" to the "stope," and hotter as you crawl along the narrow tunnel to the face on which the miners are working.

Clad in trousers and singlet, with strong limbs shining with perspiration, they are busy shovelling the quartz down a "pass" to the level below. If you kick a stone down the pass you hear it bounce from one side to the other of the chute sometimes for a good hundred feet. And these man-holes aren't roped off.

At times these "passes" are blocked by a stray piece of wood becoming lodged across the chute, perhaps halfway down. The first sign of this is when the chute mouth is opened and no quartz falls through. A strong hose might remove the obstruction or more quartz might be shovelled in on top in the hope that the extra weight might break the blockage. If these efforts fail, then it's someone's unenviable job to climb 40 ft. or 50 ft. up the narrow pass and discover what's causing the hold-up. Then he sets a couple of sticks of gelignite amongst the spoil, praying that the obstruction holds the tons of quartz above it just a few moments longer, and after lighting a 6 ft. fuse scrambles down that chute far faster than he went up it.

Ventilation is provided by air-boxes, which carry fresh air to where the men are working, and fans, which draw the air in at one shaft-head and out through the

other. The air goes down to the bottom levels first and works upward through the others. Thus the deeper you are the purer and cooler is the air.

The miners generally work to contract, being paid by the number of fathoms of reef removed. They are usually given a length of reef from 80 ft. to 100 ft. long as their "stope," and the distances mined are measured periodically. Most

of the truckers are on contract at so much per truck. Shift bosses are on monthly salary.

It's tough work and not an ideal occupation for any one prone to claustrophobia, but the pay is good and though dangers seem real enough to the layman the experienced miner takes little notice of them.

A piece of stone falling from the roof can give you a nasty knock, but the papier mâché hats provide some protection and are light on the head. A steel helmet, though safer, would be far too heavy and hot for these temperatures.

Danger is minimized through adequate timbering of the tunnels, and here there is a profitable industry allied to the mining. Every foot is timbered by the miners themselves as they drive their tunnels. The baulks are 1 ft. in diameter and 6 ft. 3 in. high. Most of the timber needed comes from bush handy to the mine.

Despite the reassurance of the shift boss that there is no danger of those millions of tons above you suddenly descending, the layman is quite glad to step into the cage and speed back again to the sweet safe air of the surface.

At the Battery

You see very little gold in the white quartz. Occasionally there is a rich patch in which the yellow glint of the