

Find West Virginia Mine Town "Shot Off the Map"

Charleston, W. Va., Feb. 28.—Gov. John J. Cornwell, accompanied by Gov.-elect E. F. Morgan, who succeeds him in office on March 4, yesterday visited and inspected the workings of the Willis Branch Coal Company in Fayette county and the surrounding village of Willis Branch, where much heavy gun fighting took place February 19, and upon their return to Charleston announced that the town resembled having been "literally shot off the face of the map."

The trip was made by the governor and his successor in response to a request from the Willis Branch company for additional armed protection. The governor-elect declined to say what he intended to do about the case after assuming office, but he made this comment:

"It is inconceivable that such conditions could exist in this day and age."

"Its citizens have abandoned it," said Gov. Cornwell, referring to the village, "leaving personal effects, furniture and live stock behind. With the exception of half famished dogs, cats and chickens, which wander about streets, and a squad of State police on duty near the station, the town is devoid of life. The company store, office, postoffice, mine foreman's home and 65 of the remaining 87 cottages are riddled with rifle bullets. The condition of other cottages shows they have been burned or wrecked with dynamite."

The governor said he learned that "every week for the past year the town has been shot up." Men who work in neighboring mines, he added, are blamed by the coal operators for these attacks.