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Well, he knew there was someone alive in the mine, because somebody was using that air. So, that changed everything. We had to go back in the mine. They found those fellows. Team went down ahead of us. We went down. We had to build stoppings first, that were knocked down, to get fresh air in before we could start moving them. In the meantime we got down to them, giving them raisins and water and stuff like that. Some of them were crying. So we started moving them. We set up a makeshift engine and a rope and small tram, and we'd take up either a stretcher case or two or three men on the small tram. We started early in the morning. The last session that my team was in the mine, we were in for 12 or 14 hours. And we took them out. And the place was low. The place was about 4 feet. And there was a foot of gas still lurking at the top. Gas is light, see. And we were taking those fellows out and taking them through, and we had to hold them down so they wouldn't get this gas. Hold them down. Of course, we had on our machines. And when they'd get out to the fresh air base, the doctors were there and they had the oxygen, and as soon as we shoved them there they shoved the oxygen mask on them. And it reacted on them differently. Some of them started to laugh. And some more started to cry. It was really weird. We had to take them out, and take them slow--and we had about 20 minutes left to take them out to the explosion doors. The explosion doors are double doors with a space between them--and they're steel. And we had to shut the fan off. She was ready to go again. We were taking those men out, and we were just watching. It could snap and we'd have another explosion. Another explosion could happen because we'd cut the air out of the stoppings--the stoppings were ready to blow. It could happen any time. It was getting very ripe to explode again. And the heat was severe. I was the last one to come out behind. My team--I had to have my team ahead of me. We got through the explosion doors, I closed the explosion doors--and that was it. That was the last of Number 4 Colliery, it was never opened again. This explosion was '56, The bump was in '58, I wasn't up there at the bump. Because after that explosion they cut the age down to 45, and that left me out. But I was instructor after that, I trained the boys till the last day that I worked. And the last day I worked, in 1965, it was a Friday.. And the next day I went over to the rescue station and I took two teams of men to train them, took them down the railroad for a walk with the machines, fully equipped--brought them back. And then I went home, and that was the last. Colin MacDonald: (You went to Springhill in 1958. You knew there'd been a bump there, but you had no idea what you were going to find when you went in there.) No, we never had a clue. I was at fires before, but the Springhill situation was different than anything you'd find. I don't think anybody was really prepared for anything like that. You'd have to really see the environment that we went into, the situation that was there. You could never visualize a thing like that happening. It was almost like an earthquake. That's about how you'd describe it. Underground, Everything was just, thrown all over the place. And the way that people were involved--pieces--people, you know. People were killed, they were mangled. It's



almost like putting people into a piece of machinery or something, you know. It's un? real. Mostly at an explosion, the majority of peo? ple that will die are people that will breathe in the gases that will put the life out like that. Where the ignition takes place, whatever's there is going to be killed right out, most of the time. (But at Springhill it wasn't like that?) No, no. These people were just trapped in a massive upheaval. That's what you could call it. Reservations 564-6417 Featuring the fUel efficient Citation by General Motors. "Rates as low as or lower than our maior competi- Where Canada's toys " ... smart money rents its cars. tniS city. Ot/f as. attmte ? National Car Rental (64), Woolbur Tannery TANNERS - WHOLESALERS - RETAILERS Sheepskin and Deerskin Products Open 7 Days a Week BLUES MILLS on Trans-Canada Highway 105 R. R. 1, River Denys, Inverness County Cane Breton, Nova Scotia BOE 2Y0 Tel. 756-2788 KARL REICHEL, Mgr.