8/24/76

Mine Safety and Health Act

H.R. 13555 - Passed House July 28. (vote of 309 to 86)

Senate bill S. 1302 - has been marked up and ordered out of
committee. Not printed yet.

Provides for improved safety procedures, penalties, training.

Both bills provide for transfer of MESA to Labor out of Interior,
the feeling being that Interior Dept. is more concerned with
energy and Labor Dept would be more sympathetic with the workers'
safety.   (This is the feature which has aroused most discussion.)

UMWA favors the bill. - per Labor Subcommittee.

American Mining Congress opposes and had recommended to RCB that
the bill passed by House be referred to Govt. Operations instead
of Interior--as a stalling tactic until, they said, a better bill
could be written. Jack Arant, of Mining Congress, approached
Senator on this because they felt Senator would oppose transfer of
MESA to Labor.   This organization feels a better bill is needed
and that industry, miners and govt. can sit down and work up a
bill. (The one under consideration was written by the United
Steelworkers, according to Arant.) This spokesman also stated
that Dr. Korn, Asst. Secretary of Labor, has indicated he does not
want to see MESA transferred to his office.)

Aside from transfer of MESA, the bill would repeal the Non-Coal
safety Law (Metallic Mine Safety) and establish one safety law
applicable to coal and non-coal industries; would provide a single
uniform procedure for developing standards applicable to all mines
and standardize enforcement procedures; upgrade the enforcement
in both metal and non-metal operations of enforcement of safety
standards, providing civil penalties. Included in the civil pro-
cedures would be one providing for an injunctive type of relief
by a district court for habitual safety offenders. Would provide
for civil closure orders instead of a fine in major safety
offenses-- protecting the miners' salaries while mine is closed
for correction of hazards. Bill would correct observed defi-
ciencies in training of miners in safety practices. It limits
the number of times an operator can have a trial on the same offens