

Dec 31/65

3

Holiday Hinders Hunter

OAK ISLAND — Crane operators with a Yuletide spirit and sliding earth in a deep pit have left treasure-hunter Robert R. Dunfield with an impatient itch to get on with the task of solving the 200-year mystery of this tiny island off Nova Scotia's south shore.

Mr. Dunfield, a Los Angeles Geologist who estimates he has poured \$85,000 into his attempt to recover pirate wealth, said Thursday night his crew of 13 men are re-digging the hole.

"It's going too slow for me," he said.

Operators of an 80-ton digging crane clawing into the island's clay soil refused to work Christmas Day or Boxing Day, "although I told them the hole would fill in.

"It's pretty hard to get people to work Christmas Day around here." Mr. Dunfield said rain and partial thawing added to the list of troubles plaguing the expedition since the digging machine took its first bite at the fabled "money pit" last August.

The 50-foot-wide hole reaching for treasure, said to have been buried here by pirates two centuries ago, was within the 39-year-old geologists's first objective of 155 feet last week.

But "slough," loose sliding earth, pushed the measurement up to 112 feet before a 12-foot advance since Christmas.

Another machine, a 22-ton mobile digging unit from Halifax, was due to arrive at the island today, Mr. Dunfield said, but is not expected to be operational until Monday.

He said the machine will work on the beach to investigate flooding of the main pit, but details of its purpose were being shrouded "until it arrives."