

# NO THEORY PROVED AT CORONER'S PROBE

**NONE OF WITNESSES AT INQUEST  
SAW DYNAMITE GO OFF.**

**NOR IS A RUNAWAY CAR SEEN**

**Practice at Granite Mountain shaft  
was to lower powder on chippy  
cage—Theory that electricity set  
off powder is not strengthened.**

Six witnesses, in addition to undertakers and doctors, testified yesterday afternoon at the inquest held by Coroner Lane into the death of 16 men at the Granite Mountain shaft from an explosion of dynamite. None of the witnesses volunteered a theory as to what caused the explosion and the cause was as much a mystery after the testimony had been given as it had been before. The inquest will be continued this afternoon.

Those who testified were John Davey and Peter Nadeau, who were pushing a car of timber from the shaft when the powder exploded; W. H. Collier, boss carpenter; Dave Parry, engineer of the big electrical hoist; Tom Green, engineer of the chippy cage, and Arthur C. Pratt, an electrical engineer, and several undertakers, who related how difficult it was to identify the bodies, which were mangled by the explosion. General Manager John D. Pope of the North Butte company listened to all the testimony, and Attorney D. Gay Stivers questioned witnesses in behalf of the North Butte company.

### Loaded the Powder.

John Davey, the first witness, a top-man, testified that he and Peter Nadeau and Carlson, one of the men killed, loaded the powder into the dynamite car. The wagon loads of powder were unloaded at the mine and they put the dynamite into mine cars, 13 boxes to the car. None of the boxes were open. It was the custom at the Granite Mountain mine to lower powder with as little delay as possible, the aim being to get the explosive off the surface, Davey testified. As a rule the chippy, or small cage, is used to lower the explosive, but the powder that exploded was to be lowered in the big cage, as the powder was going to the 2,800-foot level. After the powder had been placed in the dynamite car, Davey went away from the shaft to get a piece of timber. The powder was 15 feet from the shaft. Almost immediately he was knocked down by the concussion of the explosion. James Blow was the nearest man to the powder, he said.

Davey, on cross-examination, said there was no one smoking near the powder, which was handled as all explosives had been handled for the last two years. He was positive there was no leakage or spillage. The nearest trolley wire was 40 feet from the explosive and he and other men had not felt any current, Davey said. Davey said he did not hear any shot fired just before the accident.

Davey testified that it was impossible for a runaway car to have hit the powder car, as all the tracks were blocked with timber cars.

### Not Electricity.

Arthur C. Pratt, an electrical engineer, testified he inspected the wiring at the Granite Mountain hoist and his belief was that it was impossible for the accident to have been caused by electricity. The wiring was done in such a way that it was impossible for the current to reach the dynamite car and if the current had reached the car it would have been necessary for it to come in contact with a dynamite cap and explode this cap through heat and not mere current, he said. Heat from an electrical current would set off a dynamite cap just as heat from a miner's fuse sets off a cap.

W. H. Collier, the boss carpenter, testified he had six men working around the shaft shortly before the dynamite went off. He took two carpenters to work on the east side of the skips and when he saw them again they were on the south side. Blanchette, a surface helper, and two more men were engaged in taking timbers from the shaft when the explosion occurred. Collier did not see the dynamite go off.

Dave Parry, who was handling the electrical hoist, the largest in the world, said he was generally notified by telephone when powder was being lowered and that proper care was used by engineers, however, the chippy cage lowered most of the explosive. The big hoist had been lifting rock before and after lunch, and when the dynamite went off one cage was on the 2,200-foot level and the other on the 400-foot level. A skip had been dumped and 20 seconds allowed for the miners to fill the skip chutes and then the powder went off.

Tom Greene, who had lowered the first lot of powder, could not see the shaft from the engine house and did not see the powder car. The chippy cage had been used that morning to hoist rock in mine carloads as there were no skips on that cage. He testified he did not always know when he was lowering powder.

Phileas Blanchette and Edward Bray, who were terribly injured, died without making any statement, according to Dr. H. D. Kistler, who had charge of the treatment of these men. There was a puncture as large as a dollar in Bray's right lung and the abdominal walls were punctured in many places. Blanchette's right leg was crushed off above the ankle and there was an ugly wound on the thigh, in addition to internal injuries.