

# NONE IS BLAMED FOR MINE TRAGEDY

## CORONER'S JURY AT BURNETT RENDERS VERDICT

Deaths Found to Have Resulted From  
Explosion of Coal Dust Caused by  
Heavy Blasting—Foreman J. W.  
Forsythe Dies From His Injuries

TACOMA, Dec. 10.—(Special.)—J. W. Forsythe, day foreman of the Burnett coal mines, who was badly injured in the explosion that killed the sixteen men last Wednesday afternoon, died late yesterday afternoon without regaining consciousness. It was thought that the man would recover, as his injuries did not appear necessarily fatal, but he took a turn for the worse yesterday at noon. The coroner's jury returned from Burnett at noon today. They went into the mine about 7 p. m. yesterday and did not conclude their investigation until 2 a. m. today. Twelve witnesses in all were examined, and a transcript of the evidence will be made. The witnesses were: James Anderson, superintendent of the Pacific Coast Steamship Company's coal mine; D. W. Watkins, David Reege, D. L. Thomas, Evan Lewis, C. F. Owen, state coal mine inspector; Oliver Whitehall, C. E. Taylor, Samuel Davis, James Anderson, Jake Anderson and John Philipps. The verdict of the jury is as follows:

### Text of the Verdict

"We find that all of the miners named came to their death, or were killed, on the 7th day of December, 1904 (with the exception of J. W. Forsythe), in the mines of the South Prairie Coal Company, at Burnett, Pierce county, Washington, as a result of an explosion of coal dust, caused by heavy blasting or shooting.

"That said J. W. Forsythe died on the 8th day of December, 1904, from injuries received in said mine on the said 7th day of December, 1904.

"We further find on an investigation into said mine, and by evidence produced, that the ventilation, circulation and sanitary conditions of said mine are first class in every respect, and no blame attaches to any one for the result of said accident."

The consensus of the testimony was to the effect that everything possible has been done by the company to prevent accidents. The incidents of the explosion and retreat of the miners and the filling of the various tunnels with black damp was gone over by five or six of the witnesses. State Coal Mine Inspector Owen told of the condition of the mine when he last inspected it a month or so ago, it then having, he declared, as good ventilation as any mine he had ever entered. His investigations since the accident had convinced him that the mine was in the same excellent shape when the explosion took place a few days ago.