

INQUEST HELD IN THE WEST PITTSTON MINE DISASTER

An inquest was held last evening in West Pittston in the case of the seven miners that were killed at the Clear Spring colliery on Thursday last. The hearing was held in the town hall which was crowded with men from all walks of life, from the coal operator down to the laborer. Coroner Dodson conducted the inquest and announced that two charges had been made in the make-up of the jury. The names of Andrew Law and James McMillan were substituted for those of W. S. Casterline and Alvin Holmes.

It had been rumored about the city earlier in the day that the officials of the company would object to Mr. Casterline's serving on the jury since he had already expressed his opinion of the affair in an interview with a newspaperman. Sooner than to be objected to it is thought that Casterline then resigned as a juror.

The company was represented at the hearing by Attorney H. A. Fuller, of Wilkes-Barre, while Attorneys Shayer, of Scranton, and Pace, of Pittston, represented the families of several of the victims. Mrs. Bladdis, whose husband was among the dead, was an interesting spectator at the hearing.

The first witness examined was Joseph L. Cake, general manager of the Clear Spring colliery. He testified that the rope used on the shaft on the day the accident occurred was purchased from the Hazard wire company, of Wilkes-Barre, on Aug. 10, 1901, and had been in use almost continually since. Witness said that the rope was breakable with thirty-nine tons,

but since it was used only for lowering and hoisting the men the strain on it was not very great.

Mr. Cake said that he had personally instructed the foreman and engineers to daily examine the machinery so as to see that everything was in good working order.

He told of his having examined the machinery on the Friday previous to the accident and at that time could notice no defects.

Henry Gruver, a representative of the Hazard company, was called and told of his making a test of this rope and found it breakable at 31 tons. There were several dents in the rope and Mr. Gruver stated that these might have happened by the rope striking against the sides of the shaft after the break occurred.

G. O. Thomas, mine foreman at the Clear Spring, was examined at length by Mine Inspector Boyie, who took a deep interest in the proceedings and stated that he personally inspected the cage and "dogs" the day the accident happened and at that time found them to be in a safe condition. When asked why the "dogs" failed to catch Mr. Thomas stated that in his opinion the "catches" did not work because of the slashing of the rope against the sides of the shaft, thus retarding the "dogs" from doing their work.

He was asked if the "dogs" were wired and replied in the negative. He was the first to reach the dead miners and found them piled in a heap on the floor of the carriage. A part of one of the guides was

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