

MINE DUST CAUSED WEHRUM EXPLOSION

IS THE VERDICT OF CORONER'S
JURY AT INQUEST.

**Believed That Inflammable Material
Was Ignited by Dynamite—Inspection
Makes Important Recommendations
to Prevent Future Accidents
in Local Coal Workings**

The coroner's jury investigating the mine disaster of June 23 at Wehrum, returned a verdict on Friday that the explosion resulted from a charge of dynamite igniting mine dust.

This was in accordance with the report submitted by the State mine inspectors. The jurors were of the opinion that the explosion would have penetrated to every part of the mine had not the dust been wet in some places.

Coroner James S. Hammers, of town, began the investigation of the



CORONER JAMES S. HAMMERS.
Who conducted the inquest
at Wehrum.

accident on Thursday afternoon and closed it Friday morning. Gen. Harry White represented the Lackawanna Coal & Coke Co., in the absence of the company's attorney, John A. Scott. Ten of the jurors were the mine inspectors summoned to Wehrum after the explosion. Among the witnesses examined by Coroner Hammers and his assistant, District Mine Inspector Josiah Williams, of Altoona, were mine inspectors from Cambria, Clearfield, Westmoreland and Fayette counties, who had visited the mine; the survivors of the accident, several of whom had recently been discharged from the Spangler hospital; Supt. W. N. Johnston and others.

Recommendations of vital interest and importance to operators and miners in this district were made by the mine inspectors in their report to Coroner Hammers. A portion of the report follows:

We deem it our duty to offer the following recommendations in order to better secure the lives, health and safety and welfare of persons employed in Lackawanna No. 4 mine, operated by the Lackawanna Coal & Coke Company:—

First—That none but permissible explosives be used for the purpose of blasting coal or other material in the mine, such as have passed the government test and are noted on the permissible list.

Second—That the mine be kept as free as practicable from dust, and if necessary to prevent any dangerous accumulations of dust from floating in the atmosphere, that the dust be thoroughly watered and kept wet.

Third—The exclusive use of non-combustible material for stemming all shot holes.

Fourth—That extreme caution be exercised in blasting and handling explosives.

Fifth—That no shot be laid deeper than the undercutting.

Sixth—That safety lamps be used when and where directed by law.

Seventh—That rigid discipline be enforced and maintained at all times.

Eighth—The employment of a sufficient number of fire bosses to examine every working place without exceptions and all roadways immediately after each shift.

Ninth—That these recommendations apply not only to Lackawanna No. 4 mine of the Lackawanna Coal & Coke Company but to all other mines of similar conditions.