

BLAME FOR EXPLOSION PLACED ON DEAD MAN

Special to The Truth.

Pittston, Pa., March 11.—Declaring that the Pennsylvania Coal company was in no way to blame for the accident in the No. 14 shaft of the company at Port Blanchard, March 2, which resulted in the loss of six lives and serious injuries to eight others, the coroner's jury inquiring into the death of Jacob Scurak, one of the six victims, put the blame for the disaster on John Ruscavage, who went to the chamber where gas had been discovered with a naked lamp after having been warned to use a safety lamp, the jury says. Ruscavage was one of the six victims. The inquest was held in the town hall yesterday afternoon and was attended by a large crowd. Much testimony was given.

John Muir, inside foreman, was the first witness, and he testified that on the morning of the disaster he had been told that six inches of gas had been discovered in chamber 278 and twelve inches in chamber 299. His other testimony was in reference to the rescue work following the explosions.

Fire Boss Hughes, who had held the position three days previous to the disaster, told of the finding of gas in chambers 299 and 278 and of his placing danger signals in each chamber. He ordered Coyle and Ruscavage to guard chamber 299 until he returned when they would put up a brattice and drive the gas out, he said. Both of those men had safety and naked lamps with them at the time, the witness said.

He told of seeing Mr. Coyle at the hospital following the accident and being told by him that Ruscavage had set the gas off with a naked lamp. He said the accident would not have occurred had a safety lamp been used by Ruscavage.

John Martin testified to having heard Hughes, the fire boss, tell Ruscavage not to go into chamber 299 un-

til he returned from notifying other miners of the gas being discovered there. It was stated by Alex Bryden, consulting engineer of the company, that in his opinion it was not advisable to keep sixty men from work because of a foot of gas in a chamber. The jurors were: R. E. Bennett, L. Smith, Patrick Lyons, Enoch Evans, Thomas Cook and W. R. Bradley. The verdict follows:

"We, the jury, find that Jacob Scurak and five others came to their death on March 2, 1909, at No. 14 shaft of the Pennsylvania Coal Co. from burns received from an explosion of gas. The evidence shows that gas existed in chamber 299 when Fireboss Hughes made his rounds. He sent two men, John Ruscavage, a brattice man, and Bernard Coyle, helper, to guard the chamber until such time as the gas would be driven out and that Hughes told the men to use nothing but safety lamps he provided them with. The evidence shows said John Ruscavage went to face of chamber 299 with a naked lamp and ignited the gas. The jury finds the company in no way to blame for the accident."

DEATH SUBJECT OF SERMON OF FATHER KRIM

A large congregation of men heard another excellent sermon by Father Krim at the men's mission in St. Peter's Cathedral last night. Father