

## FATAL ACCIDENTS

## Explosion of Gas at Nottingham Colliery

On January 11, 1910, at about 7:30 p. m., an explosion of gas occurred in No. 6 Slope, Ross Vein, Nottingham Colliery, whereby the following persons lost their lives: Joseph Masetis, Miner; Joseph Litz, Miner; Michael Duchinski, Miner; David Roberts, Slope Engineer; Anthony Asposkis, Laborer; Wassil Duchinski, Laborer; Michael Seposki, Driver.

The following persons received slight injuries: Simon Berato, Simon Dunda, Andrew Smith, William Vanshepski, Joseph Katskin, and David Jones, and suffered more or less from shock. The majority of them, however, walked to their homes unaided.

A number of men were cleaning up a fall and retimbering at the foot of No. 6 Slope, which is a continuation of 9 East airway, driven from No. 2 Slope extension, Ross vein, as by reference to map hereto attached and made a part of this verdict the same will more particularly appear. The purpose was to facilitate haulage by No. 6 Slope, which would be very convenient for No. 2 Slope, by the way of No. 7 East gangway, thereby dispensing as far as the haulage was concerned with 9 East gangway and the extension of No. 2 Slope from this lift. A number of men were also mining coal on the north side of an anticlinal, which runs in an easterly and westerly direction, to make connection with chambers which had been driven from No. 9 East gangway and abandoned.

The persons who escaped injury and who had been at work in the immediate vicinity of where the explosion occurred, after recovering from shock, could not advance any definite statement as to the initial point of the explosion, or as to how or where this body of gas had originated, or from which lamp it had been ignited. It was thought at first that during the interval between the work of the day men and night men a fall had occurred at the foot of No. 6 Slope, where the roof was known to be very high, that had possibly liberated a quantity of gas, an occurrence that frequently takes place in many of the gaseous mines in this district. This, however, proved not to be the case.

Each miner was provided with a safety lamp, and no gas was discovered in any of their working places. An abundance of air was flowing uninterruptedly in two separate currents, one distinct current in No. 9 East airway, and the other in No. 9 East gangway. Those who survived were employed in the former current of air; those who were suffocated were employed in the latter current, showing conclusively that the explosion took place somewhere on this gangway.

A large volume of air was traveling in this section of the mines, which shows that after the explosive force was spent the terrific speed at which the air traveled to fill up the partial vacuum brought the after damp so suddenly upon the victims that escape was almost

impossible, although one of the laborers employed on the airway current stated that his miner insisted upon going up the slope, at which place the rescuers discovered his body.

The officials of the mine in making an investigation of this portion of the workings discovered a very large fall in a chamber on No. 9 East gangway, which led them to believe that possibly a body of gas had been liberated by this fall and was conveyed by the current, and coming in contact with an open light created an explosion. It is well known that in a very gaseous mine, a fall of such an extent will generally give off a certain amount of gas spontaneously, while others open up or expose a feeder of gas that will not become exhausted for sometime afterwards. It was also known that a check door situated on the gangway had been destroyed by a local fall, and on account of the nature of the roof it was decided that the door should be removed and erected between chambers Nos. 22 and 23. After the day shift was over, a bratticeman and his helper commenced to build the check door and it was nearly completed when the explosion took place, supposed to be at No. 6 Slope, a distance of 2,500 feet further inside and upon the same current.

It was known that chamber No. 23, parts of which were inaccessible was making some gas. This chamber, due to a check being destroyed, had been deprived of the usual amount of air, and sufficient time had elapsed that a body of gas could have easily accumulated. Chamber No. 23 was accessible in the face, where, according to the evidence of the fire boss he had detected a small body of gas. The remaining portions of this chamber had fallen leaving large cavities in the roof, and therefore could not be examined by him. It appears that in the construction of the check door, its purpose had been accomplished in the deflection of sufficient air to keep these two chambers free from any standing gas, and again joining the main current at the foot of chamber No. 23.

The fire boss spent considerable time with the bratticeman while the door was being erected and claims with much stress that the small quantity of gas that was being removed was insufficient to adulterate so large a body of air as was traveling on the gangway and towards No. 6 Slope. He must have been thoroughly convinced as to this, as he was on his way to No. 6 Slope when the explosion occurred, but was not quite within the explosive range and therefore suffered no injury except that he was forced to the floor of the mine.

In order that the persons employed in this part of the mine would be able to throw more light as to the cause of the accident, I instructed Dr. D. W. Dodson, Coroner, to hold an inquest, which inquest was held on the 26th day of January, 1910, at Plymouth, Pennsylvania, and the following verdict was rendered: "David J. Roberts came to his death on the 11th day of January, 1910, at Nottingham Colliery, L. and W. B. Coal Company from injuries received as the result of an explosion of gas. Six fellow laborers perished at the same time and from the same cause. The evidence shows: First, that the men were working in 9 East No. 6 Slope of said colliery, and that the explosion occurred about 7 p. m.; second, that a body of gas had accumulated in either chamber No. 22 or No. 23, abandoned workings. This accumulation of gas was due to the breaking down of a check door by a fall of roof which took place about 16

hours before the explosion occurred; third, that the rebuilding of the same check door was begun without first notifying the men who were working in farther on the same split of air. This repair work was ordered by, and was in charge of, John E. Richards, Assistant Mine Foreman, and David W. Jones, Fire Boss.

We find that the said Fire Boss, David W. Jones, was negligent in his duty in not notifying the men in the same split of air to go out before the air current was tampered with. We also find that the Assistant Mine Foreman, John E. Richards, was negligent in his duty in waiting so long to have the said check door repaired. We also find that the certificates of competency of two of the deceased miners were fraudulent and were irregularly issued. This fact we deplore and hope that a remedy will soon be found to eradicate the evil.

W. R. WOODS,  
THOMAS OWEN,  
MICHAEL DEVEY,  
ANTHONY BATT,  
AUGUST WISHNEFSKI,  
GEORGE RYSCAVAGE,  
Jurors."

## CONDITION OF COLLIERIES

### KINGSTON COAL COMPANY

Kingston No. 2.—Safety, ventilation and drainage good.  
Gaylord.—Safety, ventilation and drainage good.

### DELAWARE AND HUDSON COMPANY

Plymouth No. 5.—Safety, ventilation and drainage good.  
Plymouth No. 3.—Safety, ventilation and drainage good.  
Plymouth No. 2.—Safety, ventilation and drainage good.

### LEHIGH AND WILKES-BARRE COAL COMPANY

Nottingham.—Safety, ventilation and drainage good.  
Lance No. 11.—Safety, ventilation and drainage good.

### DELAWARE, LACKAWANNA AND WESTERN RAILROAD COMPANY

Woodward.—Safety, ventilation and drainage good.  
Avondale.—Safety, ventilation and drainage good.

### PARRISH COAL COMPANY

Buttonwood.—Safety, ventilation and drainage good.  
Parrish.—Safety, ventilation and drainage good.

### PLYMOUTH COAL COMPANY

Dodson.—Safety, ventilation and drainage good.

### GEORGE F. LEE COAL COMPANY

Chauncey.—Safety, ventilation and drainage good.