

# Gas Explosion Was the Cause of Death of Men at Boomer; Chief Henry Makes Statement

A local gas explosion caused the death of the 23 miners who were killed Nov. 30 in Mine No. 2 of the Boomer Coal & Coke Co., at Boomer, according to the verdict of the jury in the coroner's inquest which reached its decision last night after hearing the testimony of more than thirty witnesses. No recommendations were made.

Earl Henry, chief of the state department of mines, returned to Charleston last night and this morning declared that the evidence in the investigation was the most conclusive in support of the verdict reached by the jury of any like investigation; he had over seen.

Mr. Henry said that one of the witnesses testified that it was his lamp which set the gas afire in the first

place and burned it out up and down that section of the mine. This, he explained, created a vacuum in the air into which a large quantity of gas rushed immediately afterwards.

## Foreigners Escape.

This witness, who was a foreigner testified that immediately after this gas had been fired he and his comrades who were to work in that section turned and made their escape. In the meantime men employed in a section further back in the mine were warned by the fumes that some sort of an explosion had occurred ahead and they attempted to make their escape.

As these were the men who were killed, it is concluded that the lights from their lamps set the gas afire the second time, causing the explosion which cost them their lives. The

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## GAS EXPLOSION THE CAUSE

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been evidence that the explosion was burned condition of the faces of many of the dead also was declared to have of gas.

The gas, it is said, came from an upper seam, and was liberated when the pillars in the section of the mine where the explosion occurred were being drawn preparatory to the abandonment of the section.

### No Dust in Mine.

Inspectors John Absalom, R. B. Cobb, John G. Vaughn and Eli J. Mason, who examined the mine with the chief inspector, expressed the belief that only the lack of dust in the mine prevented a catastrophe that would have claimed the lives of many more miners.

This belief was also expressed by Superintendent W. F. Handt, of the Sunday Creek operations and experts who examined the mine.

Superintendent H. T. Huddy, following the taking of evidence yesterday requested Chief Earl Henry, of the state department of mines, to furnish him with an inspector to formulate plans to safeguard as far as possible the operation of the mine.