

PROBE CAUSE OF MINE DISASTER

Inquest Postponed Until Work of Investigating Explosion Is Completed.

12 COAL MINERS KILLED

Little Town of Burnett, Near Tacoma, Must Care for 25 Fatherless Children.

TACOMA, Wash., Aug. 29.—Cause of the explosion in the Burnett mine of the Pacific Coast Coal company, which yesterday cost 12 miners their lives and seriously injured three more, 170 escaping unhurt, was undetermined late tonight. Investigation by State Mine Inspector James Bagley and his assistants, company officials and representatives of the miners was begun last evening immediately after the removal of the bodies from the mine and was continued throughout today and tonight.

The inquest over the bodies of the 12 men, which was to have been held this afternoon, has been postponed until 2:30 o'clock tomorrow afternoon.

The little mining town today faced the task of caring for seven widows and 25 fatherless children.

Gas or Dynamite.

The explosion, which occurred at 4:30 o'clock yesterday, was due either to gas or a "shot" of dynamite that went wrong, State Mine Inspector Bagley said this evening, when he came out of the mine. He expects to know tomorrow. Dust, he said, was undoubtedly a contributing factor in either case.

All of the men who were killed were found along the 1750-foot gangway, somewhere above where the explosion occurred. William Johnson, fire boss, who, the men declared, had fired at least two shots of dynamite in the few minutes before the explosion, was found farthest down the gangway. Many of the men were burned almost beyond recognition.

Boys Escape Through Airshaft.

Several men who were apparently in the path of the explosion escaped unhurt, while three men standing at the mouth of the gangway into the rock tunnel were killed. Six boys turned back into the gangway and, pushing their way through the dust, smoke and gas, escaped up through an airshaft.

Work today was hampered by the necessity for repairing the wooden stoppings that shut off the chutes from the gangway and keep up the proper circulation of air as the clearing out proceeded. Mr. Bagley, Deputy Inspector Simon Ash, David Botting, representing the state mine operators, Superintendent George Clark, Stephen Green, in charge of mine operations for the company, Rasmus Christiansen of the Black Diamond mine and Samuel Cady, Albert Shafer, A. Caulishaw and John Robinson of the miners' local of the United Mine Workers of America were in all day and tonight.

Red Cross Offers Aid.

A delegation from the Tacoma Red Cross chapter went to Burnett this morning to offer assistance.

This is the first explosion here in 14 years.

William Johnson, the fire boss, had 11 children.