

FAILURE TO OBSERVE MINE RULES COST 5 MINERS THEIR LIVES

(BY MORNING JOURNAL SPECIAL LEASED WIRE)

Santa Fe, April 25.—Jo E. Sheridan, state mine inspector, has made a preliminary report to the governor on the Dawson mine disaster on the night of April 14. Five men were killed at that time and mine No. 6 badly wrecked. It will require at least a week before it will be possible to get into the workings of the mine itself.

The coroner's inquest will not be finished until such time as the mine can be entered and explored. It will be its purpose to determine what caused the explosion as far as possible. The purpose of the state mine inspection is to learn everything possible about every disaster that precautions may be taken to prevent similar disasters in the future.

Every possible known precaution has been taken in the operation of the mines at Dawson. An expensive electric firing system has been installed with the idea of preventing all loss of life when the shots in the mine are fired. The mines are wired. At the south is a cut-off box and a second cut-off box is located further in. The electric current is cut off here as well as at the firer's cabin some distance from the mouth of the mines.

During the day the miners drill their holes and place beside them one and a half pounds of approved powder and adopt tamping. At night every miner must check out. Should any miner fail to check out, search is made for him at his working place in the mine and his boarding house is located. In other words, the board must show that every miner is out of the mine.

The mine firers thereupon go on duty. They proceed into the mine and load every hole that is properly drilled and connect up the firing wires. Imperfect holes are condemned. This done, the mine firers open the lower cut-off box and throw the switch, and next the box at the mouth of the mine. They proceed to the mine firer's cabin, where they register their names and hour. When all have reported the man at the cabin throws the switch and fires the mines. This done, the switch is turned off.

When the mines have been exploded the mine firers again go to the mine and cut off the two electric boxes, removing the wires in the mine. This process is a nightly proceeding.

On this particular night mine No. 6 exploded and it was wrecked. The upper part of mine No. 1 was also affected where it was connected with No. 6. Two mine firers were killed in mine No. 1 and two others in the connecting tunnel with No. 6. A laborer was also supposed to have been killed though, at the time Mr. Sheridan left, his body had not been located.

Mine firers, according to testimony at the coroner's inquest, had gotten into the habit of starting into the mine before the shooting was completed to save a little more time and be able to return home a few minutes sooner. The men killed had evidently left their quarters ahead of time and were on their way into the mine when the disaster occurred. It would appear from the regulations in force at the mine for the protection of the men, in this case were disregarded.

The cause of the explosion is not known at this time and it may never be fully determined. It will be at least a week before the mine can be explored. Mine No. 6 extends more than a mile and a quarter. After the mine has been explored Mr. Sheridan will make a full report to the governor.