

Fire Boss Failed To Inspect Workings Is Decision Of Jurymen

**Evidence Introduced at Inquest into Dilltown Mine
Explosion Shows Negligence Caused Disaster—
Find Gas Was Ignited by Coming into Contact
With Open Type Motor on Hoist.**

DILLTOWN, March 25.—That the fire boss on Monday, March 20, the day of the accident, failed to inspect the room in which the gas explosion killed five workmen in Mine No. 1 of the Dilltown Smokeless Coal Company, was the finding of the coroner's jury Friday following the inquest.

The verdict rendered by the jury follows:

"We, the jurors, find that Stanley Kider, Joseph Kider, Dominick Colangelo, John Suzanne and Paul Caranche came to their death by an explosion of gas in room No. 12, five left entry A, of the Dilltown Smokeless Coal Company, Mine No. 1, the gas igniting from an electric hoist. We find from the evidence that Fire Boss Vincent Roseman failed to inspect room No. 12 and other rooms in that section on Mar. 20, although his report made on that morning showed mine was in safe condition for the men to enter.

Nine witnesses were called in the inquest conducted by Coroner A. K. Stewart and his deputy, H. R. Dill. The witnesses included four mine inspectors from Johnstown, Nicholas Evans, C. H. Crocker, Thomas D. Williams and John I. Thomas.

The evidence introduced at the inquest showed that the conclusions of the mine inspectors as to the cause and the initial point of the explosion were absolutely correct.

A feature of the Dilltown explosion that has not been in evidence in other explosions in this part of the bituminous coal regions, is that the gas was ignited from an open type electric hoist. If an electric hoist with open controllers and all other parts open to the passing current can cause such disastrous result, any other open type, electric motor may cause a repetition of the disaster, the mine inspectors note in their report.

Those in attendance at the inquest declared that they never have heard a more complete and detailed account of an explosion and just what had been done by the men affected with not a single particle of contradictory evidence. The inquest also showed

that no gas had been discovered in the mine in the last 15 months.

Opinion has been expressed that special commendation is due the motor runner and his assistant for their prompt action in reporting their discovery on the morning of the accident, which probably saved the lives of other workmen.

Evidence was presented at the inquest to show that the fireboss had not examined the room in which the explosion occurred since March 18. It is the rule that a fireboss after inspecting a room leave his mark in chalk with the day and date. No mark was found dated later than March 18, the evidence proved.

Mine Foreman Charles Harrison was among the witnesses called. He detailed the efforts of the rescuers. Other witnesses gave evidence of minor importance.

The mine inspectors in their report filed with Seward E. Button, chief of the department of mines, make the following demands as the result of the Dilltown explosion.

"First—That Rule 67, Section 5 of Article 9 be fully complied with. 'In any gaseous portion of a mine, all motors, unless placed in such rooms as are separately ventilated with intake air, shall have all their current carrying parts, also their starters, terminals and connections, completely enclosed in explosion-proof enclosures made of non inflammable material.

"Second—That this section of the mine be properly examined by a competent and efficient fireboss as required by law."

The complete report of the mine inspectors as introduced at the inquest follows:

On March 20 1922, about 7:30 a. m., an explosion occurred in the Dilltown No. 1 Mine, resulting in the death of five persons. The mine is located in Buffington Township, Indiana County, Pa., and is owned and operated by the Dilltown Smokeless Coal Company. The mine is a drift

Continued on Page 7 Column 2.

COMMERCIAL TRAVELERS HAD FINE BANQUET

**Most Successful Event
in Delightful Manner at
Moore Hotel Last Eve-
ning in Years Accomplished**

FEATURE NOTES

(Communicated)

The Fourth Annual Banquet of Indiana Council of United Commercial Travelers of America which was given last night at the Moore Hotel was a very successful event. After all the banqueters were gathered at the beautifully arranged table, decorated in orange and purple, the colors of the order, our most worthy and able counselor Mr. George T. Buchanan was introduced by Senior Counselor C. W. McNaughton to act as toastmaster and to have charge of the rest of the evening. And well he filled the place. The invocation was given by Mrs. Capt. Evans of the Salvation Army after which all was served with the different courses of suppers, Chicken and waffles and all the trimmings that go with them.

During the serving of the different courses our worthy toastmaster kept things lively with one of his good jolly jokes or by the announcing of a good old time song, which fitted the occasion. The singing was led by Alec Stewart and he put the old time punch to the singing, which is one of Alac's trademarks.

The good lively Dutch Campbell orchestra was there with their usual snappy tunes. After the ice cream and coffee were served the toastmaster introduced Mr. Capt. Evans of the Salvation Army, who gave a very interesting talk, stating he was a salesman, selling a very good line.

Continued on Page 7 Column 1.

NEW GAS FIELD

PROGRAM FOR

Inquest on death of Stanley Kider 1922

Clipped By:
cmoser36353094
Jan 23, 2021

FIRE BOSS FAILED TO INSPECT MINE JURYMEN'S VERDICT

(Continued from First Page.)

opening, from which the "B" or lower Kittanning seam of coal is being mined.

Upon learning of the accident, two of the undersigned inspectors immediately proceeded to the mine. Arriving on the scene they found that the bodies had already been recovered and the injured cared for. After consulting with the mine management and learning from them where the accident took place they proceeded at once to the affected section and found that the explosion was confined to a small area.

On Tuesday morning, March 21st, the undersigned inspectors commenced an examination of the mine to ascertain if possible the cause of the explosion and to make recommendations to prevent repetition of such accidents.

We entered the mine through the main haulage way to a point three thousand feet from the opening known as five left entry, and proceeded up this entry about four hundred feet at which point "A" entry is turned off to the right. Going up "A" entry, we found at No. 4 room the first evidence of disturbance and we continued along the entry to No. 12 room where the condition of the entry indicated that the force of the explosion had come. We then crawled up the room to within 25 feet of the face where explosive gas was encountered. An examination of the coal at the face showed that it had been undercut, blasted down and was in a normal condition.

A short distance from the face an empty car was found, to which a rope from a portable electric hoist, located about 50 feet from the face, was attached. One of the bodies was found at the car another at the electric hoist, both being badly burned, the only two of the five being burned. Evidence of great heat was found in the immediate proximity of the electric hoist, the lines of force radiating from this point out the room and across through a cross cut to No. 11 room where two men were found unconscious.

After completing a thorough examination of the room and noting all conditions set up by the explosion, and taking into consideration that the mine was operated as a gaseous, approved electric cap lamps, permissible powder, and electric shot firing apparatus being used in all parts of the mine, we are of the unanimous opinion that a body of explosive gas had accumulated at the face of No. 12 room and so displaced by the movement of the car being pulled towards the face that it was ignited by coming into contact with an open type motor on the hoist. Furthermore we are of the opinion that No. 12 room was not examined by the Fire Boss prior to the men entering the mine on the morning of the explosion. The same will apply to all of the working places in this immediate section. This opinion was arrived at after a thorough examination accompanied by the Fire Boss, in which we failed to find and he was unable to show any evidence of having performed his duties.

In conclusion, and in view of the above facts, the commission feel it their duty to make the following demand for the future safety of the workmen and the protection of the property:

1st. That Rule 67, Section 5 of Article 9 be fully complied with. "In any gaseous portion of a mine, all motors, unless placed in such rooms as are separately ventilated with intake air, shall have all their current