

Fireboss Had Warned Men, But Too Late

**Fireboss Potts Found
Cave-in Liberated Gas
in Old Working.**

**REACHED MEN
AHEAD WARNING**

**Gas Sweeping Out on Lev-
el Touched Off by Open
Flame.**

The gas explosion at the St. Clair Coal Company's operation, Wednesday morning, which resulted in the death of eight men, was blamed on the flame of a miner's lamp.

Secretary of Mines Michael J. Hartneady, after an investigation at the scene of Wednesday's explosion, said he was convinced that the flame of one miner's lamp ignited gas which seeped into the workings after a fall of earth in a nearby slope.

Hartneady said the open light was not a violation of safety rules because the workings were in a non-gaseous area.

In a public statement following a hearing held at St. Clair yesterday, Secretary of Mines Hartneady stated that apparently Andrew Potts, fireboss at the mine, and one of those who lost his life, had not thought quickly enough.

Testimony at the inquest indicated that Potts in making his early morning investigation discovered that in the section where the accident occurred the gangway had caved into old workings. He is reported to have warned the men to keep out, but apparently had not told the workers to extinguish their carbide lamps with the naked flames.

A conference was held yesterday afternoon by Mine Inspectors Timothy Ryan, Pottsville and James Grace, Heckscherville; Colliery Superintendent John Jones; Michael Kenezo, assistant superintendent; Harold Smith and Harvey Harrison, general manager and chief clerk respectively. A second conference was held later following the arrival of Secretary of Mines Hartneady from Harrisburg.

Admitted To Hospital

Joseph Stepanoski, who was believed to have escaped unhurt in the blast, was admitted to the Pottsville Hospital yesterday for observation and treatment. It was he and Peter Homa who spread the alarm when the blast occurred. Stepanoski was weak and suffering from shock when admitted and will be kept under observation for several days to determine if there are other injuries. Homa also was treated for shock Wednesday.

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Warning Fireboss Potts Came Too Late To Avoid Blast In St. Clair Mine

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in the Warne Hospital and released Thursday morning.

The other six still in hospitals were reported as slightly improved early today.

Harold Smyth, manager of the company yesterday, said the company carries disaster insurance to the amount of one million dollars, in addition to the regular insurance carried through the State Department.