

Enquiry by Coroner's Jury Into Hollinger Disaster

Nine Witnesses Examined by Mr. Percy White, K.C., for Jury. Evidence Given by Messrs Brigham, Knox, Williams, Johnson, Emery Curtis, McLean, Dr. Moore and A. N. Young.

The coroner's jury to enquire into the deaths at the Hollinger mine in the recent disaster was resumed on Friday morning last and was concluded before evening. The verdict given by the jury will be found elsewhere in this issue, together with other parts of the evidence.

Coroner H. E. Montgomery presided at the session of the inquest that opened on Friday morning. The jury comprised the following:—

Roy Asseltine (foreman), I. E. Dunn, P. C. Maltais, A. Laprairie, Chas. Burke, Alee Koskala, R. Cornthwaite, R. Anderson, Howard Hefferman, G. H. McQuarrie, Wm. De-Feu and A. Rochefort.

Crown Attorney S. A. Caldbick was present and with him was Mr. Peter White, K.C., counsel for the Royal Commission, who had been sent by the Attorney-General to give any possible assistance to the Crown Attorney and the coroner's enquiry. Mr. A. G. Slaght, solicitor for the Hollinger at the Royal Commission, was also present, as were also Mr. Thos. Sutherland, Chief Inspector of Mines for Ontario, Major McMillan, Mining Inspector, Cobalt, and Mr. Geo. E. Cole, Mining Inspector for the Porcupine District.

Mr. Peter White read a statement to the jury, in which he said he had been sent to the enquiry by the Attorney-General to assist the Crown Attorney. He quoted Section 162 of the Mining Act in regard to fatal accidents, and said that this showed it was the part of the jury to discover when, how and by what means those losing their lives in the disaster had come to their death. "All the known circumstances so far as I could ascertain were brought to the attention of the Royal Commission," said Mr. White. "You may if you like, confine your enquiry to the simple one of ascertaining the time and cause of death. It however, has been rumoured that there is certain evidence now available which was not available at the time of the investigation, and if there is any such you might consider whether you would hear any witness who can throw any further light upon this disaster or the cause of it or the responsibility for it. If any juror knows of anyone who can give evidence, the Crown Attorney will be very glad to have such witness subpoenaed, as it is the desire of the Government that the very fullest light be shed upon all the circumstances surrounding the

recent occurrence at the Hollinger Mine."

Mr. White went on to refer to rumours that had been brought to him that some said that the fire had been in stope 58 and not in 55A. "I do desire to say that acting upon my instructions, I am here to keep investigating rumours of that sort. It would be a pity," continued Mr. White, "if after the work of the Royal Commission there should be any disposition to say that evidence had been overlooked." In regard to the suggestion that some might be afraid to tell what they might know, Mr. White directed attention to Mr. Brigham's straight declaration that no man would be discriminated against for telling the truth. "If you have evidence, talk to this jury or to the Royal Commission," urged Mr. White, "but if not, stop talking." Mr. White went on to say that if any juror knew or thought he knew of anyone who could give evidence bearing on the matter to give the name or names to the coroner now. Mr. White also made it known that if new evidence developed at the inquest or otherwise, the Commission would return and hold further sessions here.

Coroner Montgomery passed on to the jury the question suggested by Mr. White as to whether any of them knew of others who could give evidence in the matter. The foreman of the jury, Mr. Asseltine told the coroner he knew of no one at present apart from those to be called on or at the Commission.

Mr. W. T. Curtis, one of the mine captains, or foremen, in his evidence said he did not know of the fire until after 11 a.m. He had no doubt now as to the origin of the fire. It was in stope 55A. He was present when the body of W. Lindsay was found about ten o'clock on Sunday evening. The body was discovered at 53, east of 10. The late Mr. Lindsay was a sampler. The body was found on the track in the sub-level. No questions were asked the witness by the jury.

Mr. Godfrey Johnson, foreman specially charged with the work of back-filling under A. W. Young, in reply to Mr. White said that he had first heard of the fire about 8.45 on the morning of Feb. 10th. The fire was located later as in stope 55A. Powder house refuse in the stope was on fire. Mr. Johnson said he had located 15 bodies, but none of the three named (Messrs Lindsay, Kam-

pula and Gardej). "The cage tender told me to come to the 550 as there was some smoke there," said Mr. Johnson. "I went, and I told the cage tender to hold the cage while I went to see what was wrong. My carbide lamp went out, and would not keep burning when I re-lit it. I sent my brother, Andy Johnson to notify Mr. Emery. I then went to the 675, telling all I met to get their men out of the mine. Then I came to the surface and notified Mr. Williams and Mr. Knox." "The rest of the day you were planning and doing what you could to get the men out of the mine," said Mr. White in closing with this witness.

Mr. James Douglas was called, but had not arrived.

Mr. Johnson returned to the stand to say that he had misunderstood one question, and wished to correct the answer. He was in the party that found Kampula's body in 14 crosstie north, 300 feet from M4. Four bodies were found there on a board. One man had apparently died as he was eating his lunch. This was Fred Pare who had a piece of sandwich in his mouth when found.

Dr. H. H. Moore told Mr. White that he had examined the bodies of W. Lindsay, A. Gardej and M. Kampula. The cause of the death of the three was carbon monoxide gas poisoning. "Did you satisfy yourself that all the 39 deaths were due to carbon monoxide?" asked Mr. White. "Yes," replied the witness. "Would fire generate monoxide gas in large quantities?" asked Mr. White, to which Dr. Moore replied that it would, and in response to a further question he said he had no reason to doubt that the fire was the cause of the generation of the gas.

Chief Inspector Sutherland asked Dr. Moore if he had taken blood tests from the dead men. Dr. Moore replied that he had, and the tests showed 65 to 75 per cent. monoxide.

Foreman Asseltine asked Dr. Moore how he accounted for the fact that some of the dead men had flesh spots and others had not, if they all died from the same cause. Dr. Moore replied that the spots depended on many factors, such as the position of the body, etc., and this accounted for any variation.

At this point, Juryman McQuarrie asked if the jury intended to attempt to fix responsibility for the disaster. If they did, the evidence they were taking was not very useful in fixing such responsibility. Mr. White said that this question was up to the jury to decide. The matter might affect the whole mining industry. Mr. White again referred to reports and rumours as to evidence that might be available, and again urged any of the jury who knew of any such evidence or information to speak up now. The jury retired to discuss the scope of the enquiry in the matter of fixing responsibility. They were out for 40 minutes. On the resuming of the inquest, Mr. A. F. Brigham, general

manager of the Hollinger, was the next witness on the stand. To Mr. White he said he was in Montreal on Feb. 10th, and arrived in Timmins at 8.25 on Feb. 11th. Both he and Mr. Knox dealt with all mine operations generally. "Do you both take responsibility for all the mine?" asked Mr. White. "Mr. Knox and I share responsibility, with the last word for me," was the reply. So far as the mine was concerned Mr. Williams' duties were equally comprehensive. Asked regarding the dumping of powder house waste, Mr. Brigham said it had not come definitely to his attention. "If you had known how it was being dumped would you have approved?" asked Mr. White. Mr. Brigham replying that he would not have any fault to find if it had been mixed with the waste rock as ordered. He was not ready to say the system itself was faulty before the disaster, as it was only reasonable to expect that orders would be carried out. He believed there had been some sort of a check on the matter. If it were a question of cars, or tonnage, or unionism in the mine, the management would very promptly hear of it. Mr. White suggested, asking why they had not learned of the dumping of the waste. Mr. Brigham said that such matters as were brought to his attention were dealt with, and he could not account for the fact that the powder house thaw matter had not reached his ears. Mr. White pointed out that there was no organization to provide for the powder house thaw disposal, and he thought there should have been in mind some system of inspection. "There isn't any system that can provide against failure to follow orders," said Mr. Brigham, who added that all systems have the human element to content with.

The Clock marking after 12.30, the inquest adjourned to 2 p.m. Elsewhere in this issue will be found a continuance of the evidence as well as the verdict of the jury.

Mr. F. A. Hague, of Toronto, was the guest this week of his brother, Dr. O. G. Hague.

NORTH BAY'S NEW HOTEL BEING RUSHED ALONG

Building Being Erected in Gateway City by Messrs Bardessono and Mascioli

In its issue last week The North Bay Nugget has the following to say about the new hotel being erected at North Bay by Messrs Leo. Mascioli and P. M. Bardessono, of Timmins:—

"With the various contractors doing their utmost to complete their tasks within the stipulated time, work on the new Empire Hotel is progressing rapidly. Although it is improbable that the building will be completed before late summer or early fall, the contractors predict that 80 of the 140 rooms will be ready for occupancy in August.

"The last word in modern fire-proof construction, the building has been so designed and the materials so carefully selected that the fire hazard has been reduced to a minimum. Five stories high, pressed brick will be used on the outside and tile on the inside of the walls. Approximately 25 bricklayers will be engaged early in April when the bricklaying will be commenced.

"The plumbing, electrical work and the furnishings will also be modern in every particular and will be in keeping with the care which has been exercised in the selection of every piece that will go into the whole to make this hotel one of the best in the province.

"North Bay firms have been successful in obtaining their share of the contracts, although several out-of-town firms have also obtained some of the business. The plumbing contract has been let to the Smith and Elston Company, Timmins; electrical work, The Electric Supply Company North Bay; steel work, Sarnia Bridge Company, Sarnia, part furnishing of hotel, McGuinty & Heavener, North Bay; brick work, tile, painting and

carpentering will be done by the day. "The promoters, Messrs Bardessono and Mascioli, have not yet selected the manager. The hotel will be conducted on both the European and American plans. It will have 15 show rooms, one freight elevator at the rear, and two passenger elevators at the front. There will be two entrances, one on McIntyre street and the other facing Fraser street. Facing Fraser street a small store will be conducted in connection with the hotel. A permanent staff of at least 25 employees will be engaged. The hotel will, in fact, be one of the safest, best equipped and most up-to-date hotels in the province."

MOTION PICTURE ACTOR GETS TIRED OF VILLAINY

"They sure keep me villaining," says Philo McCollough, who plays the heavy role of Sewart in "Easy Pickings," a First National production featuring Anna Q. Nilsson, which came to the New Empire theatre tomorrow.

"Not that I object, especially, but I would like some day to be a nice, sweet-mannered chap. I had a chance in 'Ladies at Play,' and it was quite a novelty.

"I've got so used to intrigue and double-dealing that I sometimes marvel that I don't get into the habit. But maybe it works by opposites; that is to say, I get so fed up with being a wretch of the deepest dye that when I'm not working I become mild and gentle in thought and habit.

"One thing is sure," adds McCollough, "there's plenty of thrill in 'Easy Pickings.' In the big interior where much of the action transpires, you never know what will happen next. Every corner may hide a black-robed figure, every panel may be a hidden opening into some mysterious passageway.

"I've always enjoyed stories like that—and I think the public likes pictures of the same description."

(Mrs. M. K. Langdon, of Brighton, Ont., is visiting her son, Mr. W. O. Langdon, Timmins.)

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