

CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA, TO WIT.

This Deponent * _____

on h oath saith, I am a _____

* Christian and
Surname in
full.

residing at _____

and the rooms wiped once a week. That has been done: that is in the powder house. I have worked that capping machine. A high cap might be caused through not pressing the handle right down. You can see from the outside if a cap is high. When right it is flat down in that cap chamber. It is the duty of the girl who does the capping to see there are no high caps. If there are any high caps they are laid aside and the cartridge re-capped. I cannot say whether the powder I started on ^{on} the morning of the accident was ball powder or not. It looked dull powder. I cannot swear it was half-past Nine the explosion took place. I cannot say what cartridges she was pressing that morning. Any cartridges I have filled with powder had not been taken out of my room that morning-not as far as I know. I am not quite sure. When I said "good" powder I meant good powder for blank cartridges. I did not mean that sifted powder was bad powder. About the conversation with Miss Fitzpatrick I said she did not like the No. 1 room. I cannot say whether she ~~helped~~ *earned* more or less there than in the factory.

To Mr. Box - I have broken up cartridges in the No. 1 room. I think that powder is taken from there to the laboratory. I never took any. Miss Reuter, I think, takes it. Different girls do the sifting. They do it in the laboratory. Other girls who have done it are Miss Reuter *and* Miss McLeod was on it once: nobody else. I have never seen it put in the bins without sifting. It is always sifted. On the morning of the accident I do not think any cartridges were taken to the No. 1 room by me or anybody else. They never read the regulations to me.

Taken and Sworn before me the _____ day
of _____ 189 at _____

Coroner.

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I have noticed a lot of regulations in the factory but I have never read them and they were never read to me.

To Mr. Smith - I never heard that Miss Fitzpatrick had an explosion there once when working overtime. They do sometimes work overtime.

To Mr. Brvant - The cannelling process is pinching the brass round the bullet to fix the bullet in position.

To the Jury - I help myself to the powder at the laboratory. There is no one in charge. I tear this ^{e cartridges} up with my fingers without help from the machine.

To the Coroner - The trolly is pushed along by hand by two or three girls. They go with it into the No. 1 room. The girls take the bullets off the trolly as they want them. They never fall, as far as I know. If they drop a couple of bullets they pick them up again. We sometimes wear hats when we work and sometimes not. When not using them we hang them up in the girls' room. They are pretty well all straw. Some of them have artificial flowers on. They are made of some sort of rag, none made of wax.

To the Jury - They have wire to tie them up with.

To the Coroner - They generally hang their hats up. I have not seen them throw them down. There is no regulation about this. They can wear any kind of hat they like with any kind of ornamentation.

To the Jury - I have worn my hat into the powder house with hat ^{pins} in it.

To the Coroner - I did not wear jewellery there. Some girls might ear--

wear brooches: I never noticed. There is no regulation about those

Taken and Sworn before me the Twenty-first day
of October 1897 at Footscray

things.

(Signed) Christina Jones.

Coroner.

CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA, TO WIT.

This Deponent* S a r a h C a v a n a g h

on h e r oath saith, I am a _____

* Christian and
Surname in
full.

residing at _____

To Mr. Box - I work in the main factory at the Colonial Ammunition Com
pany. I have been in their employ six years. I only know what goes
on in the factory part. I was in the No. 1 room on the Wednesday. I
was putting the disks in. I had been working there before, a good
while before, about five months. I was diskings then. I was working at
that for a few days. While there I did not see any girls breaking
up cartridges. I have never seen any doing that. I worked there also
three years ago. I have never seen them opening cartridges in that
room. Alice McLeod was working on the Wednesday in the partitioned
place turning the papers down. I went there about Eleven o'clock ~~in~~
in the morning and remained till the evening. ~~I did~~ I did not see
her working that filling machine that day. Miss Greenham and Miss
Fitzpatrick and I were working there. I was in there on the morning
of the accident about half-past Eight. I was ~~working~~ ^{diskings}, Alice McLeod
was pressing with that machine and was doing it where I was. I stay
ed till I finished my work. I was not out very long before the ac-
cident. I then went to work ~~in~~ in the No. 2 room. Miss Reuter order-
ed me to go there. I did not notice where Alice McLeod put her car-
tridges. I worked at the machine some years ago. I could turn out
about 9,000 a day with it. I made no change in my dress when I went
into that room. I wore the ordinary every day dress and the same
boots as usual. All the girls do the same. I have been on the can-
neluring work also in that room and putting in the bullets. Sometime
back I wax-wadded in the powder room but never in No. 1 room. I

have never done any powder sifting nor acted as powder girl. I was
Taken and Sworn before me the _____ day

of _____ 189

at _____

CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA, TO WIT.

This Deponent * _____

on h oath saith, I am a _____

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residing at _____

in No. 2 at the time of the explosion. I ran out through the pack-
ing room, outside and stopped there.

To Mr. Bryant - I heard the explosion. It sounded like a crash of boxes
I did not hear a single explosion go off before the larger one. W
When I was disking cartridges on the Wednesday before I was working
on the opposite side to Miss McLeod and near the cannelling machine.
(Looking at the plan) I was working close to the door. I was
disking at the same place on the Thursday morning.

To Mr. Smith - I saw Miss Fitzpatrick on the morning of the explosion. I
do not know that there was an accumulation of cannelling cartridges
from the previous day. I did not notice a pile of boxes contain-
ing filled cartridges.

To the Jury - It took eight hours to do the 9,000.

To the Coroner - When in the No. 2 room I did not hear anything strike
the roof at the time of the explosion. I did not hear the roof
struck strike the other ^{roof} and slide down.

To Mr. Box - The explosion did not seem to me to make much noise.

To the Coroner - It did not shake the No. 2 building at the time.

To Mr. Box - I did not notice that one of the windows of No. 2 room was
blown in.

To Mr. Bryant - On the morning of the explosion I left the No. 1 room
shortly ~~after~~ before the explosion and ~~when~~ ^{went} into No. 2. Before I
heard a greater noise I heard like one of the cartridges going off
I thought it was out of the capping machine. The ~~other~~ ^{larger} explosion was

was immediately after that. I was on
To Mr. Box - I did not hear the other roof hit the building.
Taken and Sworn before me the day

To Mr. Box -
of October

1897

at

at Hockley
Coroner.

(Signed) Sarah Cavanagh.

C. Cantley
Coroner.

CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA, TO WIT.

This Deponent * JANE DOHERTY

on h er oath saith, I am a _____

residing at _____

* Christian and
Surname in
full.To Mr Box - I am a married woman living at 15 Paisley Street, Footscray.

I have been employed at the Ammunition factory about $2\frac{1}{2}$ years. My general work is in the main factory, examining pellets that are put into the bottom of the cartridge cases. I know the room the explosion occurred in. I worked there on one occasion between four and five months ago - I know the partition in that room. I cannot say where Alice McLeod generally worked - she was not working there when I was there. I ~~ne~~ never saw any blank cartridges there. I worked there on Martini Henry cartridges in the "sporting" part of the room behind the partition. I ~~ne~~ never worked in the main part of No. 1 room. I was putting wax wads into Martini-Henry cases before they were put in - the powder was in of course. Those cases came from the powderhouse. They were carried from there to where I was working without any wads in - I worked at that one day. I have not seen other girls working at that there. I do not know where the cartridges came from; they were brought in and put to me. When we are working we do not look where they come from - we have no time. They were brought along the trolley line through the main room to the partition part where I was working. On the Monday or Tuesday before the accident I passed through No. 1 room - Miss McLeod was turning in blank cartridges - I did not see any blank as I passed through. No girl was working that machine (exhibit) when I passed through. I have no idea how many cartridges there were in that room where Miss McLeod was working. I always had my clothes on when I went into the room, no special dress, just the ordinary, and no special shoes. I have not seen the trolley in that room. I have only noticed Miss Cavanagh as well as the three deceased girls working there. There are boards ~~of~~ ^{and} regulations put up in all the rooms. I cannot tell what was on them - if I read

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them I forget what it was . When I was wax wadding martini cartridges the day I was working on them there they brought in one or two trays at a time only - a tray holds 100 and something . I put the wax wad in with my fingers . We wad them as they stand in the tray and leave them there. The tray is a square of wood with holes bored in it . I have not done any breaking up cartridges or sifting powder.

To Mr Bryant - I mean four months before the accident ~~that~~ I was in that room. On that occasion when on the wax wadding Miss Cavanagh was disking the ball cartridge, taking them from me . I worked by the door and Miss Cavanagh took them from there to where she was disking - I know nothing about the disking . There was nobody else working in the same room - Miss Cavanagh was in before me - I think Miss Greenham was bulleting there . There was no other work being done in the "sporting" division . The cartridges were brought to me on trays . I cannot say whether they were brought through the No' 1 room - how they were brought I cannot say.

To Mr Box - They might bring the powder through the big door or through the No. 1 room by the trolley way; I never noticed, as you must not take your eyes off your own work - Miss Reuter I think was bringing the cartridges . I was never warned by anyone against bringing matches in my pocket to this room - we are not allowed to bring matches anywhere . No one ever told me about carrying matches , except the general knowledge about it.

To Mr Bryant - I knew that no employe was allowed to take matches into any part of the factory - all the employes know it perfectly well.

To the Jury - We all knew we would not carry matches in there - I never carry matches anywhere . I know that because there is a notice out-

side the gate as you go in. 21st day (Signed)

Taken and Sworn before me the _____

of October 1897 at Footscray

C. Canoller

Coroner.

Jane Doherty.

CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA, TO WIT.

This Deponent* JAMES ANDERSON

on his oath saith, I am a

• Christian and Surname in full.

residing at.

To Mr Box - I am the storeman and clerk at the Ammunition factory. I work in the office in the front of the building . The manager of the factory is Captain Whitney - I take charge of the factory when he is away. Sometimes I direct the operations of those working there when he is away ,and sometimes the foreman,Mr Jones,does it . It is part of my duty to have charge of the magazines - there are seven of them. When powder is delivered to the factory from the Government magazine it goes into one of our magazines -I receive it from the Government officers - there is no signature - we take an order from Captain Whitney for it on the magazine officers . I bring it to the factory with the assistance of one of the hands .I put it in the magazine and keep the keys in the office - the office is locked - when I go out I always lock it . Captain Whitney can get in with it as he has a duplicate key - we are the only ones who can get in . The foreman comes to me or Captain Whitney when he wants to get in the office . I keep a record of what powder we have in the magazine. I deliver the powder to the laboratory where the powder girl receives it . I go and put down in the powder book in No.I room what I have delivered to the laboratory - the book was blown up . I kept it there because it was the handiest place to keep it . It is not a book that is required for the general working of the office ,simply a powder-book . It is impossible to tell now what powder I gave to the laboratory. Three or four other books were kept there ;the case book and the bullet book,to put down what cases and what bullets are received from the factory for manipulation there :also the sporting case book to put down the sporting cases received from the factory. Also the wage book;that was for keeping the wages of the girls working in those departments.

The girls in No.1 room powder house and packing room. (No.3 on
Taken and Sworn before me the _____ day)

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at

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the

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the plan) The wages book is to put down the amount the girls earn and what work they do, whether piece work or wages - Miss Reuter kept that book - she does not fill it up each night. If Miss McLeod has been working a day at pressing cartridges at piece-work it is entered a couple or three times a week into the wages book- sometimes every day- it depends on whether Miss Reuter has time. Miss McLeod had a little book or slips for her record. Those books were never taken into the main office, only to enter into the filling room wages book (produced) There is Miss McLeod's entry for the week before - the book shows what she did as well as the quantity for the week ending September 2nd "Friday, capping blank, I, 365. Saturday, capping blank (the number is not stated) Monday, capping blank, I, 500". I cannot say in what room it was done. "Tuesday, capping blank, I, 500" - that is the total for the week. There were two Miss McLeods; it does not say which one it was - Miss Reuter makes this book up. "Week ending September 9th". There are two Miss Jones's - I cannot tell which is which by this book - we call them both "Miss Jones" - I do not distinguish them. Miss Jones on Monday the 6th and the week ending September 9th "Helping in the packing room and sifting powder". Tuesday 7th "Sifting powder, $8\frac{3}{4}$ hours, two barrels" ~~the~~ ". There is only one place where it is done- I am certain of that - in the laboratory. Wednesday "Sifting powder again, half a barrel". The book shows the total amount for the week. It does not show how much powder Miss Jones sifted during the week - it is not piece-work - Miss Jones is paid by the week "choking blank" means crimping it. Miss McLeod on the Monday "sifting powder", she is paid by the day that week _____

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"Sifting powder" on Tuesday and "wax wadding" examining blank, 7,000 cartridges :helping in the factory", than means doing odds and ends, cleaning up . McLeod - felt wadding . Friday 17th, felt wadding: sporting cartridges, 3,000 , *packed, sorting* , 700, wadded and pressed, 500, $8\frac{3}{4}$ hours " Monday "felt wadding sporting, 2,500 - turning over blank, 14 boxes" - I cannot say how much a box holds . Tuesday-"turning over bland, $33\frac{1}{2}$ boxes, glazed board discing , 500". Wednesday - "turning over blank, glazed board discing , $8\frac{3}{4}$ hours ".

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Thursday "pressing blank $6\frac{1}{4}$ hours ", the day starts from One O'clock on the previous day. Those last two days have had to be guessed because we lost the records - Miss Reuter filled these in on the Friday, the day after the accident. I suppose the $6\frac{1}{4}$ was put to make up the 48 hours for the week - Miss Reuter keeps a check on the girls' work in this book only. There are no means by which we can tell accurately how many cartridges that girl pressed. This book does not give the amount for that week because they were not certain of it because they had lost the record of the two days - they made a guess at this. I cannot give an idea of how many cartridges Miss McLeod manipulated the day before the accident - there is no book that shows that. The week of the accident the book shows Miss Jones doing - Friday "powdering blank, 750 - sorting, powdering", I do not know what that means - it may be a mistake for sifting powder. Monday "Powdering blank, 2,775: powdering ball 2,300". Tuesday "powdering blank, 5,700: powdering ball, 2,200". Wednesday, "capping blank and powdering blank". Thursday "powdering blank" - that does not show how much she did (pages of book marked Exhibits G.H.I) That book was not in the fire; it was in No. 2 room. The books burnt are the powder book, the case book and the bullet book. They were kept in a little desk just inside the door, near the entrance door, on the Southern side -- at the door facing No. 2. Some charred bits of one of them have been found - the powder book was like an ordinary exercise book, about 18 inches by 9. Nobody can get powder out except myself and Captain Whitney from the magazine to the laboratory. On the week of the accident I delivered two barrels of gunpowder, 200 lbs weight. The week preceding that from the magazine to the laboratory it was three barrels, as

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near as I remember . The last two barrels I delivered were both ball, but one to be used for blank. Powder RFG 2 - I barrel of blank powder was delivered that week. Between the Monday and Thursday, the week of the accident, two barrels were delivered , both RFG2. The preceding week I remember 3 casks of powder RFG 2, two for ball and one for blank. All the powder I delivered then was RFG 2 - I took it to the laboratory - nobody was there - I knock the heads off in the laboratory. Christina Jones never gives a receipt for the powder delivered - When I take any one of those casks . There was a small quantity of some other powder - the balance left over from the previous ~~xxxxxx~~ barrel of ball powder. There was a little bag of powder, a few pounds, that had been used, and obtained from breaking up cartridges - I saw that in the last time I was in the laboratory before the accident - that was on the Wednesday. I delivered a cask of powder that day - I had seen it there before - it was a small quantity of sifted powder, 10 or 12 lbs - I cannot say how long it had been there . The last delivery of sifted powder into the laboratory was about three weeks before the accident - I cannot give the number of the magazine I got it from - it is a magazine set apart for that purpose (pointing out the one on the plan, No. 15) - that is where the sifted powder was kept - there was a little kept in another magazine, the last one to the right (showing on the plan, No. 17) Those were the only two that had sifted powder in them. When I delivered the sifted powder a few weeks before the accident, it was a barrel - the powder was in a bag in the barrel - it had been taken out of cartridges - I do not know what part of the factory it was brought from - it is powder we had in stock some time - three or four days before that there would

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be another cask - I might have put three or four casks in - I cannot remember - it had been ~~used~~ in the powder house . I have been in the company's employment about two years . Captain Whitney has not at any time informed me that the use of sifted powder was dangerous . I have read the correspondence between the Defence Department and Captain Whitney as to the use of sifted powder - I cannot say I recollect the correspondence . I do not remember that the Defence Department have told Captain Whitney that the use of this powder was dangerous . Captain Whitney never warned me against the use of sifted powder . I often put small lots of sifted powder into the laboratory. The last time I put some in was three or four weeks ago ,between the Monday and the Thursday I may have put some in . If the book had not been burnt it would have shown what powder was put into the laboratory,whether it was ball or blank or sifted . They sift the powder in the laboratory - different girls do it - I have never done any . From the laboratory it is taken to the magazine and then back again,if required . Powder put into the magazine after being taken from the blank cartridges is never used again without being sifted . The girls can get no powder anywhere except from the laboratory. All the powder that the girls used must have been obtained from there - there is no way of finding out how much powder those girls used during that week. That book will show how many cartridges they filled except the last two days . If Christina Jones was filling cases with powder ,sometimes it shows how much powder she used ,and not in others . I cannot say why it shows that in some cases and not in others. 9,000 cartridges would take a barrel of blank,100 lbs. Captain Whitney does give out the powder sometimes,very seldom. He

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was about the works for three weeks before the accident . I do not know whether he served any powder out during that time. The last powder I took to the laboratory I took from magazine No. 15 . I sometimes go into No. 1 filling room . I was through *it on* the week of the accident - I was through it on the Wednesday. I ~~have~~ an idea what cartridges were in that room . I should think there were between ~~40,000 and 50,000~~ 40,000 and 50,000 rounds of all sorts, that is a rough estimate - the room was never emptied - sometimes it had ~~very~~ little in, and sometimes more than others . The last time I saw the room with very little in was two or three months ago, I mean, when it was nearly all cleared out . From that time to the time of the accident they had been constantly working in it - it never gets properly cleared out - there must be always some there, from one operation to the next - you could not work without *that*. There was more ball cartridge in it than blank. There may have been 2,000 or 3,000 in that room and 7,000 or 8,000 in the division room , that is, finished cartridges waiting for examination , that is in the "sporting room", finished blank, crimped - that was done in No. 2 room . There were not more than about 2,000 or 2,500 blank uncrimped cartridges in that room at that time , and about 35,000 ball cartridges in different stages . The whole lot did not go off: if they did they would leave the brass cases behind .

In that room were there any cases of cartridges which had been exploded?

There were a lot of empty sporting cases.

I mean the brass cases that had been exploded ? There were a lot of old heads there: no old exploded cartridges like that (showing) The cases picked up afterwards did not belong to the cartridges that had exploded there that morning . There were 18,000 or 20,000

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empty cartridge cases that had never been filled and never had any powder in . I am not sure whether they had caps in - I do not think so. I think they were cases just as they came from the factory. There was a notice board in the filling room (showing charred board) That is what ~~is~~ left of it - that was on the corner West of the sporting room (showing)- I cannot remember the words of it .

Is this it ? " No. I .Not more than one truck of powdered cases uncovered with wads to be at any one time in this room"? Yes . That was hung between the main room and the sporting room. It is not very easy to tell the difference between sifted powder and R F G 2 . It is simpler to tell between blank and sifted powder- blank is of a dull colour - sifted ball powder is of a bright colour ; one is a bright colour and the other ~~is~~ a lead black. If it has not been sifted at all it is full of dust and bits of wax - I never saw anything else - the sifting is to clean the wax and the dust out of it - the sieves are very fine . I have not seen them breaking up cartridges in the No. 1 filling room . From the powder house with a tray they would carry the Martini Henry cartridges in to the sporting part . - they would go through No. 1 room . There was another girl than Christina Jones a month or two ago , Miss Jones alone was the powder girl for a month before the accident - Miss Youl was not the powder girl - she used to work in the factory. I do not take much notice what they do. No. 6 on the plan is marked breaking-up room - it is used as a store-room . I believe it has been used as a breaking up room, but not since I have been there . There are a lot of empty powder barrels and other things in it - there is no powder in it . They break up some of the cartridges in the smoke house - there have not been many broken up since I have

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been there . We converted nine months ago from ball into blank without pulling them to pieces - took the bullet out and the wads and made the case shorter - we have a small implement for taking them out - pull the powder out ,then cut the case down,then put the powder back again after it is sifted - I am certain it is sifted - it was Kynoch's cartridges that were converted . That operation was done in No. 2 room - the room was cleared out specially for that job . The sifted powder was in stock a long time before I came,two years ago. There has been a little taken out of the cartridges since that time - I have no notion where it was done or who did it - Miss Reuter may be able to say who did it . We have had no ammunition rejected since I have been there . I keep the books - there is a book that would show how much powder has been taken out of cartridges. One of the girls in that book was sifting powder that was got in this way ^{viz:-} that as they go on working they often find a few bad cases and they open the case and break it up - they take it to a certain part to do it - they take it into the sporting room if there is nothing else there . They do not clear the No. 1 out to do that operation;it is not necessary for just a few cartridges . I cannot say why Captain Whitney provided that a house called the "danger house" was to be alone used for breaking up cartridges . I understand the regulations .

Can you explain to the jury why Captain Whitney provides a breaking up house for *manipulating* rejected cartridges ? I am not speaking of rejected cartridges .

Why does he provide a breaking up house for the purpose of taking powder out of cartridges - why is it called a "danger" building and why are only two people allowed in it? _It is a danger building . It

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is not necessarily a danger building the moment a person begins to open a cartridge because the powder is taken away there and then. The examination room is in the sporting department. When the girl in the examining room finds a bad cartridge she does not open it; she gives it to the forewoman who takes the powder away there and then. I do not think that is contrary to the regulations.

James Anderson

Taken and Sworn before me the 21st day
of October 1897 at Footscray
C. Anderson
Coroner.

CORONER'S INQUEST.

This Deponent* JAMES ANDERSON

VICTORIA, TO WIT.

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To Mr. Box. - I cannot give the date when the last sifted powder was put

into the magazines before the accident. It would be only a week

or ten days. It was put into the laboratory before going into the

room. It was then taken to the magazine and back to the laboratory.

A few sporting cartridges have been broken up. The chief part of

the sifted powder was obtained from the Martini-Henry cartridges. W

When the girls sifted powder, the refuse that passed through the

sieve was thrown into a tub of water that was in the yard. The sift

ed powder was put into bags and then into a barrel. From there it

was taken to the laboratory and then used. I do not recollect any

cartridges being rejected for a long time. None have been rejected

since I have been at the works: that is nearly two years. If there

was any rejection a notice would come to the office. It is done in

writing. A book is kept in the office so that we can say when any

and how many have been rejected. It is called the "Batch" book. I

will get it. To say that in 1896 when I was there 200,000 rounds

were rejected, they may have been rejected by the testing Board.

They have not been rejected by us. If we reject them we break them

up. When the testing Board for the Defence Department rejects them

we submit them for test again after rejection and we go on submit-

ting them till they are passed. That is quite a usual practice down

at the factory. When cartridges are rejected by the testing Board

which means that the Government will not accept them we run them

in again ^{as you call it} till they do take them, if we think them good enough. We

do not break them up. We got that powder these girls were working

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on h oath saith, I am a

residing at

* Christian and
Surname in
full.

at sifting by taking some ^{paper} ~~paper~~ blank to pieces, about 30,000 just lately. We did not think the paper cases were good enough so we took the powder out and put them in brass cases. Then the sifting ^{shown} ~~shown~~ in the long book relates to powder obtained from paper cases and some from ball cases. South Australia have not rejected some thousands of cartridges, only one small lot, a small batch: there might be 20,000. When the book says that Miss Jones on the 9th. 6 of September was sifting and did succeed in sifting 3½ barrels of powder, that powder came from the blank paper cases I should say. I do not know as a fact. That is the powder that is subsequently re-used. When it says in the book that on the 9th. of September Miss Jones sifted 3½ barrels of powder it does not necessarily mean 325 lbs. of powder, because they do not fill the barrels. I cannot tell for certain whether anyone can tell what cartridges she was sifting. The book ought to tell you. If the book does not no one else can tell you. ^{I gave the figures roughly.} ~~From the book you see~~ There were about 200,000 rounds rejected by the Government from the 6/5/96 till the 15/7/96 that is ball cartridge. None of those were broken up. We just re-packed it and ran it in again on them. I cannot remember any blank cartridges being rejected. I do not think there were any blank cartridges rejected on the 9th. September prior to this accident. I cannot say whether 10,940 blank cartridges submitted for the South Australian Government on 9th. September 1897 were rejected. The book I spoke of will tell you. Assuming that they were I cannot

say what would be done with the powder out of them. We might sell

Taken and Sworn before me the _____ day

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them

CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA, TO WIT.

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on h oath saith, I am a _____

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Surname in
full.

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them later on. I did not say "run them in again." We would wait for our customer. We have sold them to theatrical companies. It would be a fair order for them to take 10,000 rounds. We did not sell them to anybody else that I know of. There are a lot of them in the store now. During my time there I have not seen sporting cartridges filled with powder in this room and ^{none} even in No. 1 room ^{without} ~~put~~ wads on them. The only notice of any kind that was in room No. 1 was that board before referred to. In the factory I have never seen them sift "R. F. G". No. 2 before using it. The only powder they do sift is powder from what you call rejected broken up cartridges, powder drawn from cases.

To Mr. Bryant - About the rejected cartridges, under the agreement the Government has with the factory, the factory has to supply so many cartridges up to a certain limit as the Government requires year by year and the Government supplies the powder for those cartridges. Every ounce of it is supplied by them. Approximately, before a cartridge is completed there are about 170 to 180 operations. Each cartridge passes through the same pair of hands or different hands so many times. Then, before they are sent out, there is a final examination. Each cartridge is overhauled to see as far as possible that there is no defect. When the examination takes place they are in boxes containing about 120 cartridges. The examiners examine them. They are the forewoman and examination girls for that purpose. As each cartridge is passed it is put in each tray or box and then another box is taken. When a cartridge is detected not to be right

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it is thrown out into a box. When the cartridges are sent to the Defence Department, or before they are sent, they are tested on the range. The test the Government applies is merely a test in shooting. Supposing they want 100,000 rounds they test on the range 100 or a couple of hundred or more of that lot and if the proportion per hundred is ~~more~~ larger than they desire then they reject the whole lot. The rejection is simply because the shooting test is not an efficient one. The result at the range is not what they expected and therefore they reject. As far as I know and they know it has nothing to do with the material in the cartridge but there may be some defect in the cap or something else. It is impossible, as far as I know, to prevent that. It is suggested that between the 6th. of January 1896 and the 15th. of July 1896 200,000 rounds were rejected by the Government: I have no personal knowledge of that. I assume that is correct because Mr. Box read it to me. I do not know as a matter of fact how many were rejected in 1897 before the 24th. of September but I do not think there was a cartridge rejected. When they have not come up to the shooting test they are then returned to the factory. They are then overhauled, examined again, and re-packed. They are tested on the range again by the factory and if the test is satisfactory the balance are submitted to the test again by the Government and if the Government are then satisfied they are right, they take them. When the powder is drawn from a cartridge it is not a breaking up of the cartridge. The breaking up room on the plan (shewing) which I show is where the breaking up

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has

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has been done. It is now used as a store room. The drawing the powder is done in No. 1 filling room in a little compartment near the main factory, the "sporting" room. When the powder is being drawn from cartridges I think there are only two girls work in the room. The powder when drawn is taken out of some half dozen cartridges and put in that box first. That box which I now produce contains two or three ounces. When that is full it is taken out to another room a little further on, the next partition at the other end of the building. Then the contents are filled into a larger packet which is kept there for the time being. That larger packet might contain four or five pounds. When that is reasonably full it is taken over to the laboratory and sifted there. In the "sporting" department there ^{are} ~~is~~ never more than a couple of ounces exposed in the box like that. It has been suggested that on the 9th. of September 1897 some 10,900 blank cartridges were rejected. I have no personal knowledge of that. As a fact, there are no recently rejected cartridges at the factory that I know of. There are cartridges in the storehouse. I was asked if Captain Whitney ever told me the sifted powder was dangerous. I have had a good deal of experience. I have been working in this factory a couple of years. I had no knowledge of powder before. A good many million of rounds have passed through my hands in that time. As far as I know or have discovered or heard sifted powder is not dangerous. As a fact the ordinary gun makers who ~~mak~~ make up cartridges use sifted powder, I am told. Some cartridges were referred to on a previous occasion, that some were

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Coroner.

converted

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* Christian and
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converted from ball to blank nine months ago. Those were Kynoch's cartridges that the Government desired the factory to convert. As a matter of fact from my experience the presence of little bits of wax in the powder when the powder is being drawn from the cartridge does not increase the danger, but I have never seen any in it. I was asked whether I was through the No. 1 room on the Wednesday and I guessed there were 40,000 or 50,000 cartridges. The cartridges are always on the move: they are never stationary for any particular time. They are always going on the round of progress towards completion. It depends at the time what the demand is whether the Government has put a heavy order in or not, as it varies according to the press of work. A truck load of cartridges would be about 5,000. The mesh of the sifter is very fine. As far as my experience goes, the sifting of the powder takes all the grit and bits of wax and paper out of it. As to the occasion of the explosion the powder used in the cartridges that were pressed was "R. F. G." No. 2 powder. I had supplied the laboratory with powder from the magazine the day before. ^{as to} ~~about~~ the number of barrels, during the previous week, I delivered three barrels, 300 lbs, the last two "R. F. G." No. 2., one for ball and one for blank. That is the same class of powder in each case. I would not deliver all that at the laboratory at one time, a barrel at a time. As one was used I would re-place it with another. I can say that the cartridges that Miss McLeod was working at that day and the cartridges being worked up in that room were new "R. F. G." 2 powder and that is supplied by the

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Government

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on h oath saith, I am a _____

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full.

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* Government. The wages book I was looking at the other day was kept in the filling rooms, no. 1 and No. 2. Miss Reuter makes all the entries in that in her handwriting. In every case she would not be in a position to speak of the details of what each girl *had* done. She would make inquiries from the girl and get the information from her as to the number done and so on. She would know what class of work the girl was doing as she gave instructions at the beginning of the day and then at the end of the day she would get the amount of work done by each girl at each particular operation. The only record of the powder delivered from the magazine to the laboratory would be the book that has been destroyed by the fire. If ~~it~~ it was suggested I did away with that book there is no truth in that whatever.

To Mr. Box - I draw a distinction between drawing powder and breaking up cartridges. Breaking up means breaking up the cartridges cases after the powder is drawn. The breaking up room was not used for that purpose in my time. It was done in the smoke house, a few. only once that I can remember. Drawing the powder was done in the partition of the room that was blown up and when drawn it is put into a paper box and the girls never had more than two ounces at a time of open powder in the *partition* at a time. Then it is carried from there into the partition at the other end of the room. I never knew of any girl upsetting any powder out of a paper box when going through the room. They might get four or five pounds of powder in the No. 1 partition, the biggest amount of cartridges that I have

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ever

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on h oath saith, I am a

* Christian and
Surname in
full

residing at

ever seen are the ~~broken~~ ^{blank} cartridges with the paper turned down. ~~and~~

~~am not seen on~~ I have seen ball cartridges with wax wads but never without wads. When the girls are turning down cartridges I do not know whether they get them from that partition. Before I was clerk at the factory I was a storekeeper. The only knowledge I had of powder has been acquired at the factory. I have never gone carefully into the question of the material of the powder. When Captain Whitney is away I am in charge. There is no one between me and ~~Capt.~~ Whitney. The powder being used by Miss McLeod the day before this accident was "R. F. G." No. 2. If the girl who deposited that ^{and} filled the cartridges which she pressed says it was sifted powder she must be wrong. I know that it was not.

To Mr. Bryant - While the operation of drawing powder is being carried on in this "sporting" place of the No. 1 room there were no blank cartridges in the No. 1 room as far as I know. As a rule Captain Whitney is there. Beyond taking the powder from the magazine to the laboratory I had nothing to do with the operations in those rooms. Captain Whitney is in charge and he gives instructions directions to Miss Reuter and she is always on the spot.

To the Jury - They were new cases that Miss McLeod was pressing.

To the Coroner - I said that sifted powder was not dangerous as far as I know. I mean not dangerous to the persons making up the cartridges.

(Signed) James Anderson.

Taken and Sworn before me the Twenty-eighth day
of October 1897 at Footscray.

C. Cantrill
Coroner.

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VICTORIA, TO WIT.

This Deponent* JAMES ROSIERon ^{his} oath saith, I am a _____

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To Mr Box - I am general manager in the gunsmithing business in Bourke Street, Melbourne. I have experience in loading cartridges and in the machines used for that purpose. I have examined this machine (filling maching on the table) it is for ramming powder in blanks. I know how it works - the cartridge is put in there and then the handle is pressed (describing) The idea is right enough for speed, but I do not think it is a safe weapon to use *for this work.*

There are two striking points, one here and one there. If that had a good stout leather wash^e here and it was regulated so that it could not come closer than that it would be all right (showing) The amount of force to ram the powder is not so great as all that. The force the other way would be sufficient, but not so quick - if you work it slow it is all right. That steel collar ought not to touch the *metal* of the body and the same thing applies to the guide piece. If a small bit of fulminate or grit or powder got in and you closed the machine it would go off. This is the worst point (body of guide) because that is where most of the dust and powder gets. To press at 1,000 *cartridges* ~~rammer~~ an hour is a fair speed, just about as fast as you could pick them up. It might go a thousand times without going off and then it might go (showing with a piece of match head) It ought to have a stout leather washer at the one end; then it could not touch the other end.

To Mr Fedden - There is no danger in having those parts made of iron and steel - copper would be just as bad as the other when one metal strikes the other. The girl is liable to put the cartridge in the wrong way about.

To Mr Bryant - The object of having this regulated in this way may be to

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