

CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA, TO WIT.

This Deponent*

on h oath saith, I am a

residing at

* Christian and
Surname in
full.

possibly claim against the Company. I do not know anything at all about these things. I do not come here to claim anything. They were afraid of the water and the ground coming down. They told me that the 7 feet legs came down $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet. They told me the ground used to swell and it used to come down. I cannot say what they were afraid of. Sometimes they could not get the truck hardly through. My husband told my daughter that he could hardly get the ground into the truck and that my son was on the other side of the truck to pull it away from him. That was the morning before he was killed. I am only telling what I used to hear them say. The water used to come in and my son used to hold it back. They used to complain about the swelling character of the ground, and these complaints were going on all the time they were connected with the mine. Many a time they said it was dangerous to work and they used to have their hands bruised and cut. My husband about a fortnight before he got killed had a long cut in his head where the dirt came down. My son's hands used to be bruised. He said it was the ground squeezing them.

Taken and Sworn before me the

16th

day

of

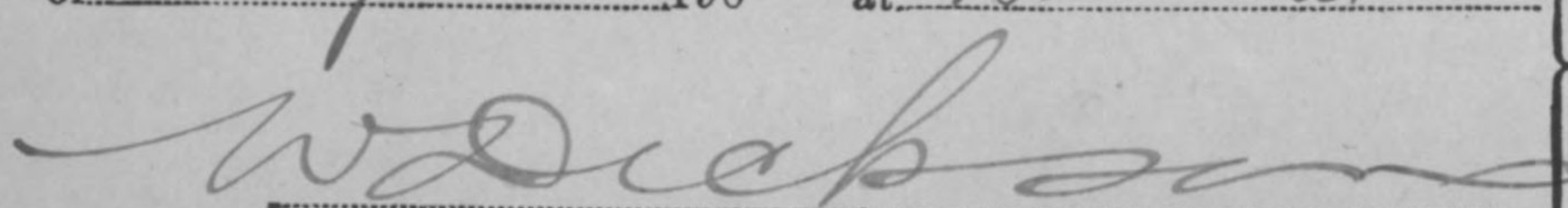
June

1902

at

Ballarat

(sd) Ellen Hunter



Coroner.

71

CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA, TO WIT.

This Deponent* James O'Keeteon his oath saith, I am a Farmerresiding at Trunk Lead* Christian and
Surname in
full.

I am brother to John O'Keefe who was killed on the Mine on the 19th. March. I had conversation on Saturday the 15th. March prior to the accident. He said that the mine-~~th~~ ground that they were working should^{not} have been taken out while the mine was on tribute and Mr. Harris should not allow the tributors to work it. There would be somebody killed in it before they were finished with it.

Cross-examined by Mr. Clarke -

My brother told me at our own house. I first made the statement given here on Tuesday to Constable Rogerson. My brother told me that the ground where they were working should not have been taken out while the mine was on tribute and Mr. Harris would not allow them to take it out and there would be somebody killed in it before they were finished with it. My brother lived at our house. My brother did not intend to stay there after that fortnight. It was against our wish he went back and finished. I know my brother was not bound to stay there. He had worked at the mine a month the last time and had been working in the tribute before that. He had been there while it was on tribute. He had worked about two years off and on. I cannot say whether he was an experienced miner. The Cardigan was the first mine he ever worked in. He had worked in Pitfield in between. My brother said that Mr. Harris would not allow the tributors to take the ground out. and was going to put on the miners to work it on wages.

Taken and Sworn before me the _____ day
of _____ 190 _____ at _____

Coroner.

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CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA, TO WIT.

This Deponent*

on his oath saith, I am a

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full.

because the ground was payable. These are his own words. I know nothing of mining myself. My brother did not mention that they had blocked out the ground in front of this. I did not know anything about the ground. He told the same words to other people as well as to me. He told them to Mr. James West, Blacksmith in Haddon.

Q. - Have you been told that possibly the representatives of your brother may have an action against the Company ?

A. - We do not want anything at all from them. We would not take it. We know that the representatives may possibly have an action. My brother never made any mention of this to Mr. Harris as far as I know. He did not tell me that he mentioned it to Mr. Harris.

Re-examined -

I had conversation with my brother on the 15th. I wanted him to leave the mine on the night of the accident. He said it is the last shift of the fortnight and he may as well finish it.

Re-cross-examined -

The night of the accident my brother said that he may as well finish it. I suppose he knew he was in danger of his life. He was not a nervous sort of man. He did not tell me he was in peril or that he mentioned it to Mr. Harris. I thought it was Mr. Harris' place to mention it to him.

To Coroner - My brother was on wages but he had worked on tribute.

Taken and Sworn before me the _____ day

of _____ 190

at _____

Coroner.

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CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA, TO WIT.

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on h oath saith, I am a

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full.

there. He told me he intended to leave at the end of the fort-
night. He could leave without giving notice. If he left he had
employment at home with me.

Taken and Sworn before me the

16th

day

of

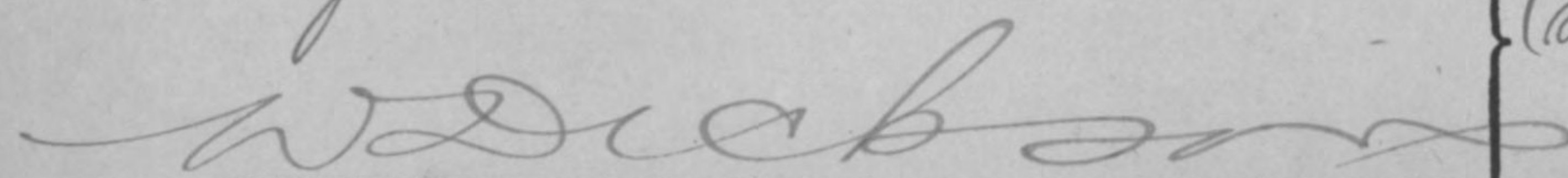
June

1902

at

Ballarat

(sd) Jas O'Keefe



Coroner.

74
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CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA, TO WIT.

This Deponent* Stephen Hall

on h oath saith, I am a Miner at present occupied at Berringa
residing at

* Christian and
Surname in
full.

I was at the time of the disaster employed at the mine. I had been working there about 12 months. The last shift I was on was on the afternoon shift before the disaster. On March 18th. till from 4 p.m. till midnight. There were O'Brien, O'Gorman, Richards and myself. James Hunter was on the plat. We were on the No. 2 shoot, I had been working there for about 12 months. We first had influx of water at the No. 1 shoot. There was a burst but nothing to speak of. I never took any notice of it. I have never read the reports of the Mining Manager in connection with the bursts of water. I cannot recollect the burst in October. I cannot tell you the month but there was a burst. I do not recollect any burst when there was some discussion as to whether it came from the All England ground. I never heard discussion at any time as to whether it came from there. (Mr. Barrett read from Report of February 28th). "The whole character of the ground at the end of the mine was changed". I recollect that and agree with it. The ground had improved in nature. There was new ground there. I agree with that report but it had improved in nature. I was there in February 28th. The blocked out ground came down. I did not see large quantities of sand there. When you say large quantities of sand it means a great lot. I disagree with it to some extent. There was not what we call a great lot of sand. There was a middling stream of water. It was not a strong stream. A strong stream means a terrible lot. The water came in the main drive I

Taken and Sworn before me the _____ day
of _____ 190 _____ at _____
Coroner.

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full.

suppose No. 3 South of West. I could not tell you exactly where it came from. If the Manager says it was the No. 3 North drive I could not tell you where it came from exactly. It came into the main drive. The water was not increasing on February 28th. Perhaps the Manager would know by the Engines and we would not know. It was not increasing from what we noticed. If we did not notice it, we could not say it was. The only thing that justified the work being suspended was to put a bigger pipe down the manhole so as to allow the truckers to get to work again. I have been working ten years in alluvial mines. I did not form any idea where the water came from. I did not know what to think of it. I have not studied it enough. I did not form any idea of it being overhead water. I reckon I would not have worked there if I thought it was a pool overhead. It does not surprise me to hear that the Manager says that it was stored under the rock. I would not have gone on working if I thought it was under the rock. On March 1st. I was there. I recollect there was a small bit of sand coming away. If the Manager said it was a considerable amount of trouble there might have been a bit of sand coming down when he was down and causing trouble. There is no ground creeping or coming down with it.

Q. - What about "the South West ground crushed a bit owing to water coming away North"? I was in the South West drive, I was down on the level at the bottom of the shoot with the truckers.

Taken and Sworn before me the day

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residing at

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full.

I heard that the ground had crushed through the day shift but it was not while I was there. I do not think it was from the water I think it was from the swelling nature of the ground. I was there on March 3rd. There was not an increase of water that I noticed.

Q. - What about "water broke away on Saturday afternoon near No. 1. crosscuts". ?

A. - There was a drop. I knew of the water breaking over the main drive. I saw a small drop of water coming down. The small drop of water compelled the Manager to have a little bit done to the shoot and a banker to be put in, nothing else that I am aware of. I had to work on a Sunday occasionally but we did not have to work on Sunday unless there was something special. If it could not be got at when the men were there. I remember that men had to be kept on the Sunday caulking the drives and cleaning up the sand. That was over this little drop of water.

Q. - On the Monday the Manager says that "He is hopeful that the trouble is over".?

A. - I was not there on that shift I was on afternoon shift. The report of the Manager "no improvement" I do not remember anything happening in connection with the works. I do not recollect the works being delayed by the water on the Tuesday, there was not thing troublesome about the water after that.

Q. - The Manager reports " Water still troublesome and was coming away in small bursts" ?

Taken and Sworn before me the _____ day

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A. - Perhaps they may be coming away in small bursts and we would not take any notice of it. There was no trouble on our shift, the ground was right enough as far as I know. I call exceedingly heavy ground, ground that would break timber as fast as you can put it in that is in a week or two. We had difficulty at times.

Q. - On March 6th. Manager says " Water about the same, ground exceedingly heavy, great difficulty in keeping it ppen"

A. - I did not see the ground extra heavy or troublesome, there was a little difficulty to keep it open at times nothing to speak of. On that day Thursday I do not know whether we abandoned any blocks. There were two blocks abandoned too poor to take out, these are the only blocks that I know of being left. The abandoned blocks were between No: 2 and No 3 crosscuts. I say now the abandoned were between No 3 and No 4 crooscuts. The expense of keeping it open would not pay for taking it out.

Q. - The Manager says " Found it impossible to keep it open" ?

A. - I do not think it was impossible if the gold had been there to get the men and money to do it to pay the expense of keeping it open. I did not notice any pieces of balsaltic rock coming away with the dirt, I did not look, I like to see things safe, there was no change after that that I can reco~~llect~~lect. I would call a large lot of water about two extra strokes. There were about $5\frac{1}{2}$ to $7\frac{1}{2}$ strokes. I mean the $7\frac{1}{2}$ in consequence of the increase of the water

so far as I know. I never knew that during that week for 3 days

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it took 3 strokes a minute. I would call that a big lot of water

We had an idea the pumps had increased, but how much we do not know.

I do not think I would have done any more than what I did if I knew.

Q. - The manager says " the burst was from the blocked out ground could not get into the inner workings, crosscuts had to be opened up to keep the Mine open. Work abandoned and staks put in" ?

A. - It could have been kept open if the men had the money to do it and go to the trouble. As far as I can recollect things had improved after that a bit, that would be a week after March ^{7th} 2nd.

Q. - The Manager says " Things no better water still troublesome and finding its way faster than we can block out" ?

A. - There was a drop of water coming over the back and not troublesome. I do not know why the Manager says the water still troublesome, we have nothing to do with what the Manager reports, we speak as we find. On the 17th. the swelling of the ground caused them to repair the shoot. Everything was all right and safe enough as far as I could see. I crawled into the blocking where the ground came down, and I saw a rock there and a little drop of water dropping in. I was curious to see the place I did not anticipate any danger, I went in to have a look round. I could only see where the ground had come down and saw the rock overhead. I suppose it would be about 8 or 10 feet up, I wanted to see how things were, that was close to where the ground came down. I suppose

it was 10 to 12 feet off, I just went up to see what the place was

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* Christian and Surname in full.

like. I do not know where to think it came from I crawled in there to see what it was like merely for curiosity. At times I wondered where the water came from but I did not crawl in to find out. I recollect 17th. March being in Kopke's Hotel I was by myself. I saw Mrs Kopke the daughters and the brother. When I was there I said I would call there some day if I did not get drowned in the Mine. If I said that once I said that 100 times, if I had any idea that any such a thing would happen I would not have been there. They were barracking me about leaving the Mine that I would be getting drowned or smothered. It was only a joke my saying I would get drowned. Mrs Kopke was barracking me for 12 months. I left the Mine about 3 weeks ago. Men were put off. I was not put off but there was a young fellow working there and either one of us had to go and I went because I had work to go to.

Cross-examined -

I do not know whether Miss Kopke wanted me to take a farm. I visited the house once or twice a week. We were chaffing amongst ourselves. We had been chaffing since I had been going there. It was not referring to the Cardigan Mine particularly it was to Mining generally. Girls have fears about men going down Mines. On the 18th. March everything was perfectly safe and sound so far as any practical man who understood mining and had any experience could see. The bursts of water were of no signification at all not

so far as I could see. It did not raise the water on the plat
Taken and Sworn before me the day

of 190

at

Coroner.]

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VICTORIA, TO WIT.

This Deponent*

on h oath saith, I am a

residing at

* Christian and
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full.

while I was there. I never saw the water on the plat. I cannot tell what the pumps would cope with. I was not there in 1897, the men that were working with me I never heard murmur. O'Keefe never mentioned a word to me about any fear. I never heard of any such thing from any of the men. I was one of the tributors. None of us left on account of the danger as far as I know, they were all anxious to go there as far as I knew. To me it is a puzzle where the water came from. On the 18th. I did not see the water coming from the place except from the blocking strip we put in, it was where we were breaking through to a crosscut on the south side. That was on the 18th. we had no previous water coming from there I am quite clear that these two blocks of ground that were abandoned could easily have been worked without any danger if they were payable. It would have meant a little extra work and timber but otherwise there was no danger. I would mean by the water being troublesome that it gave a little difficulty in the breaking. If I were to work in water it would be troublesome to open out, but so far as it indicated danger it would be ridiculous. I said so far as I could see half the alluvial Mines would be shut up. Mr Barrett objects.

To Coroner - I have been in one or two of the Mines. I think as far as they went they would have to shut up if they took notice of things like that. I regarded it as trifling myself and I

never heard the men complain about it. On the 18th. I could see
Taken and Sworn before me the day

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VICTORIA, TO WIT.

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residing at

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full.

the rock on either side of us. I could see it overhead plainly visible. I know the result of the boring since the accident. There is no success with these bores. In my opinion boring for water before the accident would have had little results. I saw wash in the strip where the water came away. That would be on the South side in the corner. We never had time to see ^{it} what~~it~~ was, it was time then to knock off. Previously to that there was no water coming from it. I cannot tell you how far the All England ground is away. From the indications on the surface as to the nature of the works done on the All England shaft there does not appear to have been much work done. They are small mullock heaps I think there would be about 2000 feet of driving altogether I cannot say exactly, between 1000 and 2000 I suppose. Right through my experience of the working of the Mine the reef was bad in places as bad as I have seen for swelling. It depends how long you let it go as to what it would swell. It would swell up a foot in a week and 2 feet in a fortnight. It would keep swelling all the time till you cut it down. On February 28th. there was no large quantities of sand as far as I could see. I did ~~not~~ regard it as serious.

Re - examined -

I was one of the bosses of the shift and in the confidence of the Mining Manager. He never discussed with me where the water came from or whether there was danger. He never asked me. There was a

Taken and Sworn before me the _____ day

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Coroner.]

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CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA, TO WIT.

This Deponent*

on h oath saith, I am a

residing at

* Christian and
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full.

about 200 feet of driving in the All England shaft. I cannot tell he
how far they are from our shaft.

Adjourned to 2 o'clock.

Mr Hall resuming - To the jury.

Q. - You said that the work was delayed in consequence of putting
in pipes ?

A. - The pipes were 5 inch and we put in 8 in: and they took the
water easily. It was about a month before the accident. The name
of the man that relieved me was Mr Mansfield, an elderly man and good
miner. I met him on the surface and told him that we had finished
blocking and he wanted to get some firewood and build a horse to
stop the ground from dragging, so that he could open it right off.
I was in the face where the burst took place previous to going to the
surface. I told him that everything was looking alright. I have
heard Mansfield say that he had about 40 years experience.
not

To the Coroner - The Mine was what you would call a wet Mine.

There was only one drive wet in the ground only the main South East
drive. There was only one place 50 feet where they had to wear
oilers and that was near the end of the main South West. I report-
ed as I was relieved. The Manager did not consult with me except
to working the Mine. I did not go and say that the water was bad
and he did not ask me about the water, nothing of that sort ever
happened.

Taken and Sworn before me the

of

June

1907

at

Ballarat

day

(Signed) S. Hall

Coroner.

83

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CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA, TO WIT.

This Deponent* John McGrath

on his oath saith, I am a Miner

residing at Haddon

* Christian and
Surname in
full.

On the 18th. March I was working at the Mine. I was on the night shift that was from 12 to 8 that would be on the 19th really. I was working at No: 3 rise with George Simpson and I went below to work in the rise. We were rising for opening sets. We had been working for $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours when I let a saw drop to the bottom. We went down after it, on reaching the bottom, Heggarty came along. He said he would like to go up and look at the new rise and I told him to go up before I went up. He did so. I do not think he was hardly off the ladder when the noise occurred, and I called out to him the noise to come down. The noise was just like thunder. I concluded that there was a lot of ground coming down, that was what it was like. I called out to my mates to come down quick. Heggarty and Simpson came down. They had no lights. My candle was out, a gush of wind after the fall put the candles out. We started for the balance shaft or to the main shaft if we could get. I had got 20 to 30 feet as near as we could remember when we struck the water and sand coming back to us to No: 3. We kept going on till we came to No: 2. I felt a body or two along the road-when I fell down I think I felt a body or two. We reached the balance shaft all three of us. I met the two truckers before I came to the balance shaft, King and Simpson Junior. I told them to go on till we got to the balance shaft. I told them to go down the ladder. I said I will go first. I went to go down and I told them to follow me. The water washed me off to the bottom. I waited

Taken and Sworn before me the day

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at

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CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA, TO WIT.

This Deponent*

on h oath saith, I am a

residing at

* Christian and
Surname in
full.

there a few minutes, to see if any of the rest would come. Nobody came. and I went to the shaft to see how things were. I was going to the shaft and I found everything all right and I was going to go back to see if any of the other men came down and I would help them to go to the shaft if they were hurt. I started to go back and I listened and I did not hear the pumps going. I said it was best to go on top and tell them to drive the pumps. I got into the cage and knocked and reached the surface and gave an alarm. I told them to lower the cage and the cage landed on the bottom and Heggarty stepped in and knocked himself away. I saw Kennedy the Engine Driver, he told me the pumps had stopped 10 minutes before we came. He said he was just going to send the braceman down to see what was wrong. We sent for the Manager and for help to get the tanks on to free the pumps if we could and we got them on and by that time the Manager reached the mine. I made a statement to the Manager verbally. I have worked in the mine 18 months I think this last time. I was in Court when the Manager's reports were read this morning. I heard them and considered them I do not know that I agree with them. I was not working where the burst occurred. We were always in the leading drives working in the main drive. I heard ~~the~~^{of} bursts of water. I heard the men talking about them but I could not pick them out. I cannot say any of the names of those that spoke about them. I heard them say they had to knock off one shift from a burst of water. That would be a

Taken and Sworn before me the

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Coroner.]

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CORONER'S INQUEST.

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full.

month before the accident occurred. I never heard the men say where the bursts came from or anyone else. I have had 14 years experience in mining. I formed an opinion as to where the water came from - My opinion is, that it came from overhead over the back between the two rocks. I heard them say there were two rocks in sinking the shaft. I formed the opinion that the water came from between these two rocks. The bottom rock is bound to dovetail going towards the All England. The All England has only one rock they say.

Cross-examined -

I say if the rock did not tail the rock would have been strong and the water would never get through and the accident would not have occurred. I have heard Hall's evidence. I cannot say whether Hall's evidence is true. I was not on his shift. Dave Adams was the most experienced miner I have seen in the mine. Mansfield never told me how long he had worked. He always told me the ground was very heavy. Top weight he said. I was not working where the accident occurred. When I was putting up the No. 3 Rise, I had no difficulty with the water. It was thoroughly dry. About 80 feet ahead of the workings. Three bores had eneterd into the wash. They showed no water. They were peffectly dry touching the wash. We never expected water there. You would not have caught us in there if we thought there was any danger.

Re-examined by Mr. Barrett -

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CORONER'S INQUEST.

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This Deponent*

on h oath saith, I am a

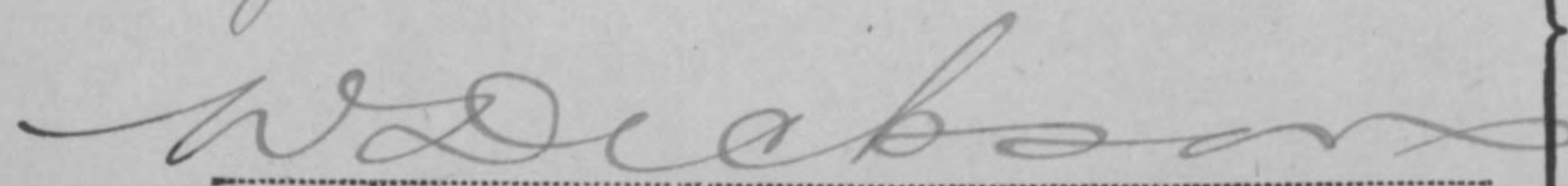
residing at

* Christian and
Surname in
full.

He ex d by M. Barnett:—I have told about the burst that occurred the month before. There
there all
was a good drop of water coming ~~from~~ the time. It was increasing
at times. It increased by bursts. It was not a steady stream all
the time. Sometimes there would be none coming. It may have got
choked somewhere. I never heard that the burst was from the
blocked out ground. If the Manager reports that the burst was from
the blocked out ground it may have been but we have not worked up
that far. I never heard of it. I had a conversation with Mans-
field. That was about when we would go home from work. Mansfield
told me that the ground was heavy and they used to have to keep
double banking and keep up the timber and they had the timbers
thick in the drive. He said he could not make it out. That might
be 6 weeks before the accident. He said the ground was heavy over-
head shoving the drive together. Fetching it in on broad side. That
is all he told me about it. I was working in the No. 3 Rise. No
water was coming from any of the rises while we rose them. We never
had water in any of them.

Taken and Sworn before me the 16th dayof June 1902at Ballarat

(Signed) John M. Math



Coroner.

87
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CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA, TO WIT.

This Deponent*.....George Simpson.....

on h is oath saith, I am a Miner residing at Sago Hill
residing at.....

* Christian and
Surname in
full.

I have had 27 years experience. I was employed at the mine on the morning of the 19th. of March. I was on the last shift. McGrath Mansfield, James & John Hunter and O'Keefe were with me and the platman Heggarty and King and Simpson were trucking. I went to work at 12 o'clock at night. My mate was John McGrath. I was working No. 3 rise in the inetemediate level. I had been working there putting a No. 3 rise up about 1½ hours. We were going to rise and the saw fell down and my mate went for it and when he went down the water broke away and it was like thunder and the lights went out and he said "Come down as quick as you can " and I and Heggarty went down. It was the concussion . I went to No. 2 rise and we met the water there. We made our way to the balance shaft and as we were going down we kept falling down and falling over timber and we got to the balance shaft and when we were getting down, McGrath went down the ladder way or was washed down and Heggarty went down the balance chamber, and I asked the truckers if they had any matches and King struck a light. I could see that the water was too strong and I would not go down the way they did. I advised them to come back and tried to make a barricade to keep the sand and water back. We went about 350 feet to the No. 1 points when I went back I saw Mansfield's body and a few feet further along I saw Hunter's body. I said if we were to build a barricade we would stop O'Keefe and Hunter inside. We went back again and down to the balance shaft and stopped there

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of.....190.....at.....
.....
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Surname in
full.

till the water ceased. After a bit I wanted them to go to the main shaft and they would not go. I went with them to the balance shaft I persuaded them to go to the drive again for safety. We went up and the two lads were eager to get back We went to the balance shaft and I went myself next time and left them on top. When I went down I saw it was useless to go down because we might drown one another. I made my way to the main shaft and the water was about half way up the pipes. I had to stoop to get past and when I got to the plat the cage just came down and Hall and Stride were in the cage and I got into it and went up with them. When I reached the surface I saw the Manager. I did not then make a statement. I made a statement after I got my clothes on. The statement was taken down. I was there when some of the other statements were made. (~~Ex: "S"~~) (Statements of Mc.Grath, Simpson and Heggarty were put in marked "S"). I have heard reports read. Before they were read here I never heard of anything about outbursts of water except when the men spoke of little bursts of water. I never took any notice of it. You would see bursts of water in any claim I have been in. I have been in a claim where there was an increase. I have been working in the Trunk Lead when you could not see the truck there. I have seen bursts there when the men had to go on top when there was a big burst. I have seen bursts every week. They would go back when the water was gone. They

used to clean up the sand and go again. The water used to come
Taken and Sworn before me the _____ day

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CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA, TO WIT.

This Deponent*

on h oath saith, I am a

residing at

* Christian and
Surname in
full.

from the rock. They used to run for it. We used not to work in shoots. The men must have been killed by falling down the shoot. I cannot say how it occurred. Whether the ground fell in and the water washed the lot away. Heggarty came up to the No. 3 rise to have a look at us. They used always come up like that. Sometimes they used to go and help the truckers. I cannot say what he came up for on this time. I have never heard what he came up there for.

Cross-examined -

The Trunk Lead was a very wet mine, as wet as there was in Haddon. It was very much wetter than the Cardigan. I think the Cardigan was a very dry one. In the end where we were working anyhow. I considered there was no danger. I would not have worked there if I thought there was. None of the men who were working in the mine informed me that it was dangerous. I used to sit down and talk to O'Keefe and others. O'Keefe never mentioned anything to me about it being dangerous. It is characteristic to have little inbursts of water like this. I have seen in the Trunk Lead the water breaking two or three times a week and it was supposed to be rock water. It would be serious if we happened to be shut in. As long as the rock holds up it is perfectly right.

Re-examined -

I say that so long as the rock holds out, everything is all right.

I have never seen an accumulation of the water on the rock. You

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would think there was a vacancy for a water course through the broken ground. I think when the ground falls in there is not a cavity between that and the rock where water accumulates it ought to drain off.

Q. - The Manager says that "the pool accumulated beneath the rock"

A. - I have never seen that before, I was never up there working.

I have never known water to accumulate overhead in consequence of ground coming down.

To the Jury - I have been there about 18 months. There were various bursts that occurred previous to the accident. There was no scare created amongst the men that I know of.

To the Coroner - I have been working there off and on and been up several times and back again. I think that was the longest spell I have had. It might have been 12 months before I was working there. There was a little water in those days but nothing to take notice of. No inbursts of water just little streams of water

Taken and Sworn before me the

16th

day

of

June

1902

at

Ballarat

(Signed) G. Simpson

Coroner.

CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA, TO WIT.

This Deponent* William King

on his oath saith, I am a Miner

residing at Haddon

* Christian and Surname in full.

I was employed on the 18th. March at the Cardigan Mine. I was on the night shift, went on at midnight. I was trucking with William Simpson. Before I went down the mine that night, I had conversation with Mansfield the Boss of the shift. He told me to go below and have some full trucks on top of the balance shaft because he was going to bring some wood to the shaft to build a horse. He said O'Keefe and Mansfield would carry the wood. Simpson and I went back and to the top of the balance shaft and when we got there there were only three trucks there. We brought the trucks to the No. 3 shoot and Simpson brought the trolley. I brought the three trucks out of the balance shaft. When I got to the balance shaft O'Keefe and Mansfield were ready to send the wood up. They came up to where we were. Mr. Hunter came out and said "You don't want any wood up there, it is not safe to work there and I am not going to work there". The Boss of the shift was William Mansfield. When Hunter said that, Mansfield said nothing. None of us said anything. He said "The best thing to do is to go up and look" and we went. We all went up to have a look although we thought it was not safe. William Mansfield went ahead with the trolley load of wood and Mr. Hunter and O'Keefe went with a truck load each. I went next, Heggarty came behind. We took a load each. William Simpson stopped behind, gathering laths. We left the laths at the No. 2 shoot. By the time we were up the shoot, four were there. The two Hunters, Mansfield and O'Keefe.

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They went there to work. I yelled out "Are you ready to pull the wood. I got no answer. I went up and looked and asked them if they were ready to pull the wood. Heggarty went to No. 3 rise to have a look. We went to have a look in consequence of being told it was dangerous. I saw Jack Hunter and Mansfield and O'Keefe on the second shoot. Hunter had a lath across from one leg to the other. And he had a chock in his hand to tighten the lath. Sand and water were coming out about 6 or 9 inches deep. He was in on top of it. I then went down. I noticed nothing else. I told O'Keefe to lower the chain and he lowered it and I hooked 3 sticks on and he pulled them up. He lowered the chain for some more. We were going to build a horse to keep it up. We were hurrying the wood up to build the horse. While I was hurrying the wood up a gush of wind came and blew our lights out and the water came. I heard nothing. We made out to the balance shaft. We followed a truck up. I and Simpson. We got half way up and the truck came off. We stayed there till McGrath came down and we went to the balance shaft and I found the matches and lit a candle and then McGrath went down the manhole and after a little while Heggarty came out and Mr. Simpson and Heggarty slid down the balance shaft chain and we stopped on top the balance shaft, I and Simpson till the water eased off a bit and we went down the manhole. We went near the shaft and the water was too deep and we turned back to the top of the balance shaft and then went up the drive. We went

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up the drive and saw Mr. Mansfield and William Hunter dead. We were going to make a barricade and I thought the others might be going back and we never made it. We went back to the balance shaft. One of us would go down now and then to see how the water was. To see if it was rising and Mr. Simpson went down and he said he was coming back but he never came back and we went to the top of the balance shaft and stayed there all the time until Mr. Fitches and Bowles rescued us. We sent on wood although Hunter said it was not safe to work. I was not scared. We went up to have a look at it. I was never scared at any time or then. I have had confidence in the Manager looking after it and keeping it safe. I never formed any opinion as to whether there was danger. I left that to the Manager. Unless he stopped me going down, I would do my work and take it for granted that it was all right. When Hunter said it was not safe to work in and that he was not going to work there, I had no discussion with Mansfield about it. The Boss of the shaft told us to bring the wood up and we brought it. I did not form any opinion as to whether it was safe or not.

Cross-examined -

I have been a miner about 12 months altogether. I was working there for about 4 or 5 months. I put no confidence in Mr. Mansfield or Adams' opinion because it was not my place to. I would not take any notice of their opinion. We did what they told us and that is all. We would pay respect to their opinion. I never heard

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Mansfield express an opinion that night nor express any opinion to Mr. Hunter. When Mr. Hunter came out Mansfield said nothing to me. him. I am quite sure of it. I am certain there was a conversation between Hunter and Mansfield. Hunter went up but did no work. They were a bit afraid of the mine. It was not the water, it was the ground I suppose. Hunter never said anything about the water or anybody else. I never heard anything about the water till the inburst.

Re-examined -

I have no idea what was alluded to or what brought the ground down. I know nothing about it.

To the Jury - The young man who is not recovered was in a West drive. I do not know how far he was from the shoot. I think it would be more than 20 feet from the shoot.

Taken and Sworn before me the 16th day
of June 1902 at Ballarat
W. J. C. B. O'Connell
Coroner. 95
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