



After only a few months' work an appalling explosion took place in November 1882 which resulted in the deaths of 7 young workers, aged between 24 and the youngest only 13 years old.



## SHELL EXPLOSION

### CAUSE OF DEATHS OF THREE SWANSEA WOMEN

The Llanelly Coroner (Mr W. W. Brodie) resumed the inquiry at Pembrey on Friday into the explosion that occurred at a West Wales Factory on Nov. 18th, when three munition workers were killed, their names being Mary Fitzmaurice, 18, Shelly-crescent, Swansea; Jane Jenkins, Washington-terrace, Landore; and Edith E. Copham, 55, Mathew-street, Swansea. Two others were injured.

Mr F. N. Powell, Llanelly, represented the Ministry of Munitions, and Mr. Hills ditch appeared for the Home Office.

Colonel Sir Hilare Barlow, who represented the Ministry of Munitions, said he had made an investigation of the disaster. In a trolley and around it were the fragments of the cartridge cases of three rounds, and in the tubes of the trolley itself three shells uninjured. The three cartridge cases were much torn, evidently by fragments of the explosion of the fourth round which took place outside the trolley. The propellant contents of the three cartridge cases had burnt out without explosion, as would be expected, and the burning of this propellant would account for the violent roaring noise after the sharp report referred to.

It was the duty of H. T. Evans, an examiner in "X" shed, to examine the rounds in conjunction with two other operatives, but, according to Evans, owing to shortage of men on the 18th ult., he was in shed "X," and also assisted in unloading shells, and he had told the two girls the difference between shrapnel and high explosive shells, but he had not told them the difference in the fuses they were likely to meet, and he did not tell them particularly to see that the cap was on No. 106 fuses. He had, however, instructed the girls to bring any shell that they were in doubt about to him. For the reasons stated already he did not think this, what he had to call Evans' neglect, was any contributory cause to the accident, although it might have been. He was satisfied that the management had done all that could be expected of them to instruct the chargewomen and foremen, who had passed on the information. He concluded that the round fell to the floor while being handled, and the absence of the safety cap was more than sufficient to cause the explosion.

The jury found that the deceased met their death through the explosion of an 18-pounder h.e. shell in process of disassembling.



A brass badge was awarded to women engaged in urgent war work. It was triangular in shape.

