

Sad Fate Of Two Workers

JURORS' STRONG VERDICT

Limerick, Friday.—An inquest was held at O'Briensbridge to-day by Mr. P. Culloo, the Coroner for East Clare, and a jury, into the circumstances under which Peter Kinsella and Michael Conroy were killed on Wednesday evening, while working as fitters on the Shannon Power scheme at the weir at O'Briensbridge.

Inspector Hall, Killaloe, conducted the inquiry. Mr. P. J. O'Sullivan, solr., appeared for the contractors, and Mr. K. D. Donnelly represented the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.

Evidence of identification of the body of the deceased man Kinsella was given by his brother, Thomas, who said he was 26 years of age and a native of Watertown Nurney, Co. Kildare.

Patrick Fitzsimons identified the body of Conroy. He added that he was working at the weir with the deceased men on the evening of the accident, and was standing on planks next to where Kinsella and Conroy fell. He described the construction of the platform of the scaffolding, and gave the position of the men prior to the accident.

PLANK GIVES WAY.

Having heard a crash, witness looked down and saw both deceased lying at the bottom of the work on the concrete base. Conroy in the canal, and Kinsella near the concrete gate rest. Before he descended he noticed that the plank on which they stood was broken. After informing the foreman of the accident, witness descended and assisted in taking the deceased Conroy to the first-aid dressing station. He was then unconscious.

Sergeant Quin, O'Briensbridge, stated that on receipt of a message to the effect that an accident had occurred at the weir, he went at once to the place. He saw the bodies of the deceased, and then proceeded to take measurements of the scaffolding and the method of construction.

THE PLATFORM.

Herr Froelke, a German fitter, employed on the scheme at the weir at O'Briensbridge, stated, on the date in question, he was working on the top of the bridge. He had previously erected the platform from which the deceased fell, and was satisfied that it was quite safe. During the day he was frequently up and down the bridge, and noticed nothing wrong with it. He had three men in his gang, the deceased and another, whom he knew as Peter, Michael, and Paddy. Some time about 6.15 witness gave instructions to have a rope hauled up to the platform for the lowering of stones. He had only turned his back to leave the works when he heard a scream, and, returning quickly, he saw the two deceased men at the bottom of the weir. They were then unconscious.

In reply to a juror, the witness said he had 17 years' experience of platform building of this kind, and never had an accident like this before.

ACCIDENT DESCRIBED.

William Heaphy, a labourer, employed on the weir at O'Briensbridge, describing the accident, stated that at 6.20 p.m. on Wednesday he was in the vicinity where Conroy and Kinsella worked. The first intimation he had that anything was wrong was when he heard a noise and saw the two men in the course of the fall, with a ladder and two broken planks. He shouted to his foreman, who promptly arrived on the scene.

Answering a juror, the witness said the men came down feet foremost. Conroy struck the concrete base and rested there, and the other fell into the canal.

Franz Drewer, chief engineer in charge of the weir construction, stated that the height of the platform above the concrete gate rest was 42 feet and 52 feet above the bottom of the canal. He did not examine the platform, as at the time he saw it the scaffolding was not complete, but the plank on which the deceased were standing should with safety carry three men.

The evidence of Dr. Joseph Humphreys was that Conroy had a compound fracture of the skull which was the cause of death. The other man, Peter Kinsella, sustained fracture of the pelvis, left elbow and shoulder, together with signs of internal haemorrhage. In his case death was due to multiple fractures and internal haemorrhage.

THE VERDICT.

The jury, after deliberating an hour, found that Michael Conroy and Peter Kinsella died from fractures, internal haemorrhage and shock, while working at the weir at O'Briensbridge, as the result of a fall from the principal plank, "which was unsafe, owing to a knot near the centre, and otherwise unsound."

They added a rider to the effect that they were of opinion that the contractors were guilty of gross negligence in permitting the use of the plank in the construction of scaffolding, and which, when tested, failed to support the combined weight of three of its mounters at a space of seven and a half feet.

They expressed sympathy with the relatives of the deceased in which the Coroner, Mr. Sullivan, Inspector Hall, and Mr. Donnelly joined.

REMOVAL OF REMAINS.

The remains of Peter Kinsella were removed by motor hearse this evening for interment in his native place, Watertown, Nurney, Co. Kildare, being accompanied by his mother and other relatives. Those of Michael Conroy will, it is understood, be interred by the Shannon Scheme contractors, Limerick. He was born in Co. Dublin, but has no relatives living, or if he has, they cannot be traced.