

MORAN'S FIRE

CONCLUSION OF INQUIRY

VERDICT OF THE JURY.

NO EVIDENCE TO SHOW ORIGIN.

In the Coolgardie Courthouse yesterday morning, before Mr. J. M. Finuerty, R.M., Coroner, and a jury consisting of Messrs. J. T. Stephens (foreman), W. Barker, and E. Eddy, the inquiry concerning the fire on December 27, by which the store and dwelling in Ford-street, owned by Mr. M. Moran was destroyed, was concluded.

Delia Moran, wife of Michael Moran, living in Ford-street, Coolgardie, said they had a store at the corner of Ford and Shaw streets. Next to the shop was the dwelling house, and then the bakehouse. Her husband owned the buildings. On December 27 her husband left the house about 5.30 p.m. to go to Perth by the 6 p.m. express. She went into the kit-

p.m. express. She went into the kitchen to light the fire about 6 o'clock. She lit the fire in the stove to make tea. She left the kitchen then and went into the shop. There was nobody in the shop. Soon after a customer came in to be served. When the customer left the shop she noticed smoke coming out of the dwelling house. She rushed out of the shop, and saw it was coming from the front door. She then went to the baker's room and called him, telling him the house was on fire. She knew the place was on fire by the volume of smoke coming out. There was not too much smoke to prevent her from going in the front, but she was afraid to go in. Gus. Pohlson was the baker. The baker rushed round to the front, and the flames were then coming out of the front door. Pohlson tried to go in, but couldn't. That was all she remembered. She heard the baker tell some boys to give the alarm. She could not remember when the Fire Brigade arrived.

Gustave Pohlson, baker, said Mrs. Moran called him about 6.35. His

Moran called him about 6.35. His room was about twenty yards from the building which was burned. He was employed by Moran as baker. He rushed round to the front of the dwelling-house with Mrs. Moran. Smoke was then coming from the front door. He had no chance of getting in. He ran into the street, and told a boy who was riding a bicycle to ride to the fire station. There was no alarm where they were. He heard the firebell ring, and it must have been before the boy got to the station. It was about ten minutes after he saw the fire that the brigade arrived. In his opinion there was no chance to save anything from the shop, which was on fire before the brigade got there. The shop was lined with hessian, between the iron and the shelves.

Michael Moran, proprietor of the corner block at the junction of Ford and Shaw streets, on which were erected a store, dwelling-house, and bakehouse, said he left his home shortly after 5 p.m. on December 27, and left Coolgardie for Perth by the 6 p.m. express. The first he knew of the

express. The first he knew of the fire was at Boorabbin, where he received a telephone message. He went as far as Southern Cross, and returned next morning by the express. The stock was insured for £700, and there was £100 on the building. The dwelling-house was not insured, nor was the Jankry. He did not keep a stock book. He knew his stock by what was ordered every month. He knew by his books what he sold. The books were in the fire. The invoices were destroyed.

The Coroner: I want your invoices for the past six months, and the bank book for the past six months. I do not think there is anything suspicious about the fire, but in an inquiry it is necessary to have the full particulars.

Continuing, the witness said he valued the stock at £1500.

The Coroner afterwards stated, as the jury were all business men, they might have an idea of the stock, and it would not be necessary to produce invoices, etc.

In reply to the jury, Mr. Moran said the business was his own, and he

said the business was his own, and he could see how things were going, and did not trouble about taking stock.

In reply to the Coroner, witness said there were no bills due, and he was not in any way encumbered.

The Coroner said he would like to impress upon the witness the necessity for keeping books, and keeping them where they could not be destroyed.

In summing up, the Coroner said there was no absolute evidence as to how the fire originated. He thought the jury could value the stock—the total insurance was £800.

The jury, after a brief consultation, returned the following verdict:—

“ The fire started in the dwelling-house, but there is no evidence to show how it started. On inspection the jury found the store very heavily stocked.”
