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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1907.



HIGH COURT OF JUSTICIARY,
INVERNESS.

(SPECIAL SITTING.)

TUESDAY, 8th October 1907, at half-past ten
o'clock.

The Hon. Lord MACKENZIE.

A. M. ANDERSON, Esq.,
Advocate-Depute.
ALEXANDER RAE, *Clerk.*

WHITEHALL, September 16, 1907.

THE King has been pleased to confer the Albert Medal of the Second Class upon Mr. Frank Hughes, for gallantry in saving life at a flooded Mine at Bonnievale, Western Australia, in the month of March last, as detailed below:—

On the 19th March 1907, an exceedingly heavy and sudden downpour of rain in the Bonnievale District caused a flood, and the inundation of the Westralia and East Extension Mine from the lower level (1354 feet from the surface) to the No. 9 (900 feet) level.

With the exception of an Italian named Modesto Varischetti all the miners effected their escape. He was working by himself in a rise 23 feet above the No. 10 (1000 feet) level, and was cut off by the flood waters and imprisoned,

as in a diving bell, the air in the rise unable to escape keeping the water at a lower level than in the main shaft, and in the stopes above the No. 10 level, where the surface of the water was 50 feet above the point where Varischetti was imprisoned.

It was at first thought that the entombed miner must have lost his life, but efforts were made to communicate with him by knocking on the rock, and after a time his signals were heard in response. It was at once decided to attempt his rescue by the aid of divers, seeing that by making use of all the available means of draining the Mine at least ten days would have elapsed before the water could have been lowered to the No. 10 level.

Diving dresses were telegraphed for to Perth, and through the energetic assistance of the Chief Harbourmaster at Fremantle were obtained without delay, so that in less than eight hours from the time of the despatch of the telegraphic message a special train was on its way to the Goldfields with two divers, Messrs. Curtis and Hearne, with their assistants and diving outfits. Meantime two other divers, Messrs. F. Hughes and Fox, of Kalgoorlie, who had lately followed the occupation of miners, and were familiar with the local mining practice, had volunteered their services and had gone to the flooded mine.

The first-mentioned divers arrived early on the morning of the 22nd March, and it was considered advisable that Hughes and Fox, on account of their mining experience, should make the first attempt at rescue. They would have to descend through an ore-pass from the No. 9 to the No. 10 level, a distance of 100 feet, then