

## Rescuers Beaten Back By Flames Mother's Desperate Effort Fails They Hacked Through Wall into Inferno Shocking Discovery In Upper Room

DEEPLY moving tragedy was associated with the death of a Sheffield widow, Mrs. Amanda Morton,(38), and her two-and-a-half-years'-old daughter, Florence Morton, in, a fire at 2 court 1 house, Trafalgar Street, off Division Street, in the centre of Sheffield, this morning.

Mrs. Morton and the child were in bed when the fire broke out and the flames increased with such furnace-like intensity that the firemen who were quickly on the scene, were unable to attempt rescue through the actual premises.

Neighbours smashed their way into the attic through the wall from an adjoining house, but were unable to enter owing to the flames and smoke. The firemen were called and hacked the opening wider, only find, on entering the mother and child dead in the attic with the clothing burned from their bodies.

Mrs. Morton had apparently collapsed with the child in a desperate effort to escape the swiftly following flames.

The fire created heartrending scenes. Neighbours with a blanket called upon the woman to jump from a window, but she was caught in a cloud of smoke and was seen to collapse.

Three younger children had, previously been got off to school by a daughter, who had also left the house to go to work.

### Fire Chief's Great Courage

The fire occurred shortly after 9 o'clock and neighbours heard the screams of Mrs. Morton, who was 'sleeping in the front bedroom on the first floor.

The fire brigade were summoned without any delay, but the fire, by some means had got a good hold, and when the firemen arrived the house was like a raging furnace.

Flames were shooting up from the kitchen through the bedroom, in which the woman and child had been sleeping, into the attic.

So great was the flame and so fierce the flames that firemen found it impossible to enter the house in the usual way. They erected a fire escape .and tried to enter through the upstairs window, but they were beaten back by the flames. They made use of jets of water to try and force themselves through, but it was impossible.

In the meantime, efforts were being made to break through a wall from an adjoining house.

### **Mother's Tragic Retreat**

When firemen had broken through the wall into the attic they found the poor woman crouched in a corner, with the baby underneath her. They were both dead. All clothing had been burnt from them but it is probable that they were suffocated. The woman had climbed up to the attic from her bedroom as the flames crept higher.

It was fortunate that, other young members of the family had left the house. Three children named Percy, George, and Rosie, aged 9, 7, and 10 respectively, had been got off to school earlier by their sister Alice, aged 16, who had then gone to: work, leaving the mother in bed with the younger child.

The fire broke out in the kitchen of the house, which is one of several single dwellings in, a courtyard, and it is surprising that neighbours did not discover it until they heard the screams of Mrs. Morton. By then the flames had got a good hold, and although attempts were made to enter the house it was found to be impossible

### **Superintendent's Daring Efforts**

Shortly afterwards the Fire Brigade, arrived, under Supt. T. Breaks, and they were at once informed by the crowd which had assembled that a woman and a child were in a bedroom of the house. By this time the building was blazing fiercely, but the firemen lost no time and spared no endeavour in their attempts to rescue the woman and her infant.

First of all they tried to enter the kitchen, through the door, but they found this to be impossible owing to the intense heat and the fury of the flames.

A fire escape was reared to the windows, and Superintendent Breaks ascended it. Dense volumes of smoke were then pouring out of the windows, and flames were sheeting out from the first floor. Under these circumstances it needed great courage to attempt the ascent, and when the Superintendent was half way up he seemed to be enveloped in smoke and flames. Spectators thought he must be burnt or suffocated. The conditions were too much even for him, and he had to slide down the ladder again.

He was so affected that he had to sit down for a moment, being almost overcome. But in a minute he jumped up, put on a smoke helmet and made another attempt to reach the imprisoned woman and her child. A jet of water was played upon him as he climbed the escape, with a view to helping him to the window with the force of the water.

Strenuous and daring as were his efforts it was impossible for him to succeed. The attempts were not given up immediately, however, for other firemen tried to get inside, without avail.

## Hole Hacked To Attic "Certain Death to Go into the Room"

In the meantime other efforts were being made to reach the poor woman by knocking a hole in the wall of an adjoining house. This work had been started by the neighbours themselves, and their efforts were continued with desperate energy and haste by the firemen; urged on by the hopes of reaching the woman in time, and saving her from the horrible death.

Two of the leading actors in the drama are James Jenkinson, of 2 Court 4 House, Trafalgar Street (the house next to Mrs. Morton's) and Percy Jackson of 66 Trafalgar Street.

Mrs. Morton had been heard to cry out for "Jimmie" - meaning Jenkinson, as she knew he would not be at work and would probably be able to come and help her.

The two men, however, realising in that it was absolutely impossible to get into the house by any other way, rushed up into the attic of Mr. Jenkinson's home, and with axes, began to break through into the attic which Mrs. Morton had rushed.

Working frantically, they quickly had several bricks dislodged; a few minutes later had made a hole through which they would have been able to pass.

"It was horrible," said Mr. Jenkinson, in an interview with the "Star." "We had made the hole and could have got through, but we were forced back by terrific heat and black smoke. We knew Mrs. Morton was only a few feet away from us, but we could hear no sound from her. It was certain death to go into the room, for we could not have breathed in the terrible smoke and heat.

"We knew that without protection it was impossible for us to get through, and as the Brigade had been beaten back by the flames below, I broke open the window in our attic and shouted to them to come up and try and get through the hole we had made."

The firemen immediately rushed up, and with their axes, they enlarged the hole and succeeded in reaching the woman. Unfortunately they were too late.

When eventually a passage, was made into the attic of the blazing house the firemen were confronted with a tragic spectacle. Crouched in a corner of the small room underneath the roof was the body of Mrs. Morton. Underneath her, as though she had endeavoured to protect it as long as possible, was the body of the child.

The woman's body was unclothed, and it would seem, that she and her baby were suffocated by the smoke or roasted by the intense heat. Despite the haste and speed with which the efforts to reach her had been made, the fierceness of the outbreak, the density of the smoke, and the intensity of the heat, had been too much for the trapped pair.

## Seen at the Window

### Agonising Sight for Neighbours with Blanket

It was apparent, Mrs. Morton had made a tragic and unsuccessful attempt to save the life of her child when she had been driven into the attic.

She had gone there, partly through the shouted advice of the neighbours, but mainly through the intense heat and dense, smoke which was surrounding her in the bedroom.

Her brother and other neighbours were in the yard below, continually pouring, buckets of water onto the window, but they were unable to approach within several feet of the doorway because of flames belching out of both the door and window.

An eye witness described the woman's attempt to save the child to a "Star" reporter.

"We were all in the yard." he said, and were agonised because we were powerless to do anything for the woman. Flames and smoke were shooting out of the downstairs and bedroom window, and smoke was clouded against the window of the attic. We knew Mrs. Morton and Florence had gone up to the attic but we could hear nothing of them. Then suddenly Mrs. Morton staggered to the window, clutching the child in her arms.

"Someone shouted to her to throw down: the child and we all prepared to catch it, we had now had time to get a blanket into which the little girl could fall, and we were ready to catch her as best we could.

"Mrs. Morton was just about to throw the child out of the window when a dense volume of smoke rose against the window and enveloped her. Still holding the child, Mrs. Morton was overcome, and she sank back and was never seen alive again.

"We were all horror-stricken. It was heartrending and terrible to see the poor woman fall back when she was just about to save the life of her child. Another second or two and the child would probably have been safe, and if Mrs. Morton had also been able to jump she might have escaped with, her life.

Terrible as the results of the fire were they might have been worse had the outbreak occurred a little earlier for there were five other children in the family, and they had left the house only a short time when the fire was discovered.

Other members of the family are George (7), Percy (9) and Rosie (10), who had been got ready and sent to school by their sister Alice (16) who then herself left the house for work, leaving her mother and the baby in bed. The house then seemed quite safe, and the cause of the outbreak is unknown.

Another daughter Annie, aged 17, lived with her grandmother, in a house immediately at the rear of the one which was burnt.

# House “Like a Steel Furnace”

## Thrilling Stories of Sheffield Fire Tragedy: Heartrending Position of Would-be Rescuers

### Fire Escape Licked by Flames

Mrs. Morton’s pitiful cries of “Help” and “Jimmie” first acquainted the Jenkinson’s of the fire.

Mr. Alfred Jenkinson, who has to-day to go into hospital for an operation, was washing himself when he heard Mrs. Morton cry out. Mrs. Jenkinson also heard the cries and rushed out into the yard.

“When I reached the door,” said Mrs. Jenkinson, “the panels looked as though they had just come out of a furnace. I opened the door, however, but I could see that the room was a mass of flames and I rushed back to fetch my husband.”



The hole made in the attic wall by neighbours from the adjoining house in an attempt to reach Mrs. Morton and her daughter.

Mr. Jenkinson told the “Star” reporter, “When I opened the door again the room seemed to be a raging inferno and if I had gone in it would have been certain death. So I ran as fast as I possibly could to the Fire Station and the Brigade was on the scene in just over a minute.

“When we heard the cries it would be about five minutes past nine, and the whole thing happened in a very few minutes.

“The Fire Brigade did splendid work in confining the fire to the house in which it originated.

“When I went for the Brigade,” said Mr Jenkinson, “smoke was already forcing its way through the cupboard in my house, and I fully expected that when I returned from the fire station my house would also be burning. If the fire had occurred during the night I don’t think anything could have saved the houses on either side.

### Tributes to Work of Firemen

Mr. Samuel Lawton, of the firm of Fisher, Harrison and Co., Ltd., Trafalgar Street, was one of the first persons on the scene after the discovery of the fire. He paid warm tribute to the work of the firemen, describing their work as heroic.

When efforts were being made to enter the house by means of the ladder, he said, the kitchen was a mass of flames “like a steel furnace,” the flames shooting six or seven feet high, and burning the ladder.

Neighbours also were anxious to praise the work of Superintendent Breaks and his men. After the flames had been subdued, women stood about in groups in the yard, talking in whispers of the horrific occurrence. The swiftness of the outbreak and its terrible consequences had horrified them all, and they seemed unable to realise that their neighbour and her baby were really dead.

Hundreds of people assembled in the street as the news of the tragedy spread in the district, and relatives of the deceased found many sympathisers and willing helpers.



The children, who had been in attendance at Springfield Council Schools, were pitiable figures. The younger children in particular seemed dazed when the news was gently broken to them. Fortunately, their grandmother's house was near to shelter them.

The appearance of the house after the outbreak was a striking indication of the fierceness with which the flames had raged. In the kitchen downstairs furniture had been reduced to a black charred mass, only a small chair and portions of a couch being distinguishable.

The window frames had been burnt out, and the door badly charred, was hanging precariously on its hinges. The ceiling had been burnt through.

Mrs Morton's husband died three years ago.



# Aid for Fire Orphans

## “Star’s” Appeal for Sheffield Fire Victims

### Breadwinner Gone

#### Desperate Plight of Bereaved Children

### A Sad History

THE terrible tragedy has brought further sorrow and suffering to a little family, which up to fateful morning had experienced very little of the joys of life.

Mrs. Morton's husband died about two years ago from tuberculosis which he had suffered for many years. In consequence, he was unable to make any provision to enable his family to live in anything like reasonable comfort. In fact, the whole history of the family has been one illness and privation.

Only the gallant effort of the brave woman who met her death under such terrible circumstances this, morning kept the little home together, and neighbours who knew her well all bear testimony to the cheerful manner in which she faced the struggle not only to nurse a sick husband, but also to bring up her little family in decency.

“Her little home,” said a neighbour to the “Star,” “was a model of cleanliness, and since her husband's death she had toiled night and day for her children and her home. She kept the children clean, and saw to it that they attended school regularly. Her one thought was for the children, and in the work of trying to provide for them she did not spare herself. Indeed she has been known to go without food herself in order that her little ones should not suffer.”

In these circumstances the proprietors of the “Star” think the case of the five children who have been left motherless and without a home is one which will appeal to the generosity of its readers, and with that object in view they propose opening its columns for the acknowledgment of any sums which May be entrusted to their care for the benefit of the bereaved family. The need for action is urgent.

## Urgency of Assistance

The orphaned family find themselves alone in the world, bereft of their only guardian, and indeed a sad case and one which we know will meet with a ready on the part of our readers.

There are five children to be provided for. The eldest is 17 years of age and the others are aged 16, 10, 8 and 7 years. The eldest, a girl of 17, has just commenced working, and is earning a few shilling a week. The second eldest, also a girl, of 16 years of age, has also just commenced work as a window cleaner. Her wages, amounting to about 5s or 6s a week, is subject deductions in bad weather. The remainder are attending school. Paying a rent of 5s a week, the combined earnings of the mother and two daughters left very little indeed to provide for the family; and as a neighbour put it “the wonder is how they managed at all.”

The grandmother of the children, on whom will now fall the care of the little ones is almost 70 years of age, and has been widowed six years. Mrs. Morton has three brothers, two of whom are married, and one unmarried. Like many more Sheffield men, however, they have been feeling the pinch of unemployment, and much as they would like to help in the present emergency they find themselves absolutely powerless. They are either out of work or depending on an odd day's job.

The lot of the family is a desperate one. It is a case in which "he who gives quickly gives twice."

The proprietors of the "Yorkshire Telegraph and Star" have opened the fund with one hundred shillings.

Proprietors of "Star" .....100s 0d

# Fire Orphans

## “Star” Fund for the Sheffield Children

### Exemplary “Mites”

#### Appeal to the Heart of a Great City

#### Opportunity for All

Soon after the publication of the City edition of the “Star” last night a little girl came into this office to give her support to the fund started on behalf of the orphans of the family of Mrs. Morton, who, with her 2-year old daughter, perished in the terrible fire at her home in Trafalgar Street, Sheffield, yesterday.

The generous hearted girl could have only just have learned that the proprietors of the “Star” had opened a fund, and she lost no time in bringing her six pennies - the total of her savings - for the benefit of children whose terrible misfortune had touched her heart.

A little child has thus given a lead to the public of Sheffield. Nobody can hear of the tragic end of Mrs. Morton and the plight of the kiddies now left orphans without feeling deep sympathy. Sympathy alone is not enough; there is an urgent need, for financial assistance to be given to the poor family.

Often it is found that persons in poor circumstances themselves are among the first to give aid to others whose distress is greater than their own. This is shown once more by some of the first contributions received for the fund. There is, for instance, the gift of one shilling from "A Widow" who no doubt realises what a hard struggle Mrs. Morton had after the death of her husband three years ago, when she was left to provide for six children the eldest of whom is now 17 years of age.

### Glooper's Birthday Money

Then there is another shilling sent by Glooper G. Shaw, who writes:-

I have had a shilling given me for my birthday, and hearing of the terrible fire in Trafalgar Street, I am sending it to you, for the children's sake.

With such examples, surely there are many citizens who will send along their contributions, no matter how small they may be. Almost every one has remarked on the horror of the occurrence, and it would be well if they translated their feelings' in financial support for the fund.

The news of the fire shocked thousands of citizens yesterday. Trapped with her little daughter in a house which had quickly become like a roaring furnace, Mrs. Morton had practically no chance to escape. Desperate efforts to save her were made by the firemen and by neighbours.

Of George (7), Percy (9), Rosin (10), Alice (16), and Annie (17). The three youngest of these had been got ready for school, and sent there by their sister Alice, who then went to work.

Annie, the eldest girl, its also working, but the total of the earnings of the two girls together is very small - only a few if billings a week.

The circumstances in which the orphans find themselves are as desperate as can be imagined, and there is obvious need for prompt and generous giving. The disastrous fire has deprived them of home as well as mother. Everything was burnt out.

Fortunately, the grandmother of the children lived at the rear of the house which was burned, and was able to look after them yesterday. It is upon her that much of the responsibility of caring for the children may now fall, but she is 70 years of age and has been widowed six years.

Other relatives too, are not in a position to give much assistance. Mrs. Morton had three brothers, two of whom are married and one unmarried but they have been feeling the pinch of unemployment and are either out of work or depending on an odd day's job for their meagre incomes.

In these circumstances, the proprietors of the "Star" felt the case of the five homeless orphans would appeal to the generosity of, readers.

Contributions acknowledged below have already been received.

Proprietors of the "Star"	<b>s</b>	<b>d</b>
Anonymous	100	0
Glooper G. Shaw (25664)	1	0
Anonymous	2	6
F. B. R.	21	0
Scot	2	6
"Sheffield Telegraph" Natsopa Chapel	10	0
W. Priest		6
Mrs. Bookless	100	0
Miss Dorothy Harrison	2	6
A Widow	1	0
H...	5	0
J. R. S.	2	0
C. B.	10	0
J. M. S.	7	6
Mrs. Hatherton	2	6
Henry White	63	0
Tony and Hannah	5	0
Anon	2	0
Mrs. Morton	1	0
Mrs. A. E. Uttley	10	0

A. E. Y.	5	0
Anon	1	0
H. C.	1	0
Staff T. C. Palmer Ltd., Fargate	11	3
W. Empson	40	0
Rev. G. W. Turner	40	0
K. G.	2	6

## Parish 'Vicar's Support

The Rev. George W. Turner, of St. Jude's (Eldon) Vicarage, Favell Road, Sheffield, writes to the "Star" as follows:-

"As Vicar of the parish where the awful fire took place yesterday, I have pleasure in enclosing. £2 to the fund you are so kindly raising.

"It is so good of you interesting yourself in these poor children and I hope your effort will be successful."

# Coroner's View of "Death Traps" Victims "Caged" In Inferno Jury Condemn Type of Window Firemen's Heroic Work Recognised

THE origin of the of the terrible fire in Trafalgar Street, Sheffield on Thursday - in which Mrs. Amanda Morton (38), as widow, and her 2½-year-old daughter Florence perished - could not be accounted for at the inquest today.

The jury added to their verdict of death by burning a rider that they considered the type of window at the house prevented the woman from escaping and they condemned the use of such windows in similar houses. The Deputy Coroner (Colonel A. M. Connell) described such windows as "death traps."

The excellent work of the fire brigade was also recognised.

Thrilling stories of the ferocity of the fire and the agonising position of the victims and helpless onlookers were given.

The "Star" fund for the assistance of the five orphaned children is meeting with generous response from all classes.

## No Light on Origin of the Fire

Evidence of the identification of the dead woman and her child was given by Percy Jackson, of 66, Trafalgar Street, Sheffield, a brother of Mrs. Morton. He also said that about 9 o'clock on Thursday morning a Mrs. Jenkinson told him that the house of his sister was on fire. On rushing there he found that the lower part of the house was well alight.

"I tried to get inside, he said but it was impossible. It would have been giving my life away. I might just as well have thrown myself into a furnace.

In reply to the Deputy Coroner (Colonel A. M. Connell) Jackson said he looked up to the attic window and there saw his sister with her daughter in her arms. Mrs. Morton was looking out of the window, which was narrow, only having a space of about 1ft. 6in.

"I thought she was going to throw the baby out of the window" said Jackson "There were several of us present, and we could have caught the child.

"But then I noticed a cloud of smoke and flames rush up and envelope her. I did not see my sister again. She disappeared in the smoke." The Fire Brigade arrived within a minute, said Jackson, and he saw them try to get into the house but they were forced back.

Jackson said he then went into the house next door, rushed to the attic, and tried to break

through the wall that separated them from his sister's house. He was soon followed by firemen and he left them before they actually broke through.

## Before the Fire

Alice Morton, aged 16, daughter of the deceased, said she was employed as a warehouse girl in Matilda, Street and had lived with her mother in Trafalgar Street. There were three rooms in the house - a living-room, bedroom, and attic. Her mother, her brother George aged 7, and the baby; Florence, slept in the bedroom, and the witness and another brother, Percy (9), slept in the attic.

She said her mother was in the habit of keeping the gas burning in the bedroom during the night. On Thursday morning she got up at 7.50 am and went into her mother's bedroom. She took a piece of paper and lighted it from the gas in the bedroom. Then she turned out the gas and went downstairs where she lit the gas with the burning paper. She threw the paper into the fireplace afterwards and made a fire there. There was a cloth rug on the floor before the fireplace.

After shouting up her brothers, Percy and George, she gave them a cup of tea each, got them ready, and sent them to school. Then she went to her place of employment, but was told there was nothing for her to do that morning. Consequently, after a "walk round" with other girls, she returned home, reaching, Trafalgar Street about 9.40. She then saw the fire engines outside the house and found that her home was on fire.

In reply to the Deputy Coroner, the girl said she could not suggest how the house got on fire.

Alfred Cook Jenkinson, of 2 court, 4 house, Trafalgar Street said that when he passed Mrs. Morton's House about 9 o'clock on Thursday morning he noticed nothing unusual. He went to the Division Street Post Office to draw his old-age pension, and returned in about 10 minutes. When he got back he found the Fire Brigade at the house.

## Dead Woman's Cries for Help

Fanny Jenkinson (28), also of 2 court, 4 house, Trafalgar Street, said that between 9.0 and 9.5 she was in her kitchen when she heard someone shouting, and recognised the voice of Mrs. Morton, who shouted, "Percy" twice (Percy being the name, of one of her brothers as well as of her little boy).

Next witness heard Mrs: Morton Shout "Jimmy" and then she knew that something unusual must have happened. She went into the yard and saw Mrs. Morton with her head 'out of the bedroom window.

Mrs. Morton said, "Fanny, our house is on fire. Ask Jimmy to come and break the door in."

Jenkinson said she went and opened the door of Mrs. Morton's house.

“When I saw what it was like, however, I pulled the door to again and went for my husband” she said. “When I returned with him Mrs. Morton was still at the window, and I shouted ‘if you can go into the attic.’ She then disappeared.

“My husband made an attempt to get into the house, but he was beaten back by the flames. A sideboard collapsed as he was there and he ran for the Fire Brigade.

"I went to warn Mrs. Morton's mother, who lives at the back, and when .I returned Mrs. Morton was at the attic window with her baby in her arms.

## Window Obstruction

“Mrs. Morton made an effort to throw the baby out of the window” said a witness, “and then a volume of smoke came out of the chamber window and rushed upwards so that she could not be seen. That was the last I ever saw of her.”

Deputy Coroner: Could Mrs. Morton have got out of the window in the chamber or the attic? - Witness: No.

Harold Haythorne, a hawker of 9 Chester Street, said that from his bedroom window; overlooking Mrs. Morton’s house, he saw Mrs. Morton at the window shouting “Jimmy.” The door of the house was then burning. It was open and he went and tried to kick it further open, to get inside but it was impossible owing to the flames, which forced him back. He also tried to smash the window downstairs, but could not do so. His father succeeded in doing this however, and flames and smoke then darted out.

In reply to the Deputy Coroner, Haythorne said: “Everything happened in two or three minutes,” and Colonel Connell remarked that the evidence showed how quickly the whole of the terrible catastrophe occurred.

Superintendent T. Breaks said the Fire Brigade received a call to the house at 9.15, and the time occupied between leaving the station and arriving at the house was exactly 37 seconds. They found that the ground floor was well alight, and were told that a woman and child were supposed to be in the building. They got to work with first aid jet, a ladder was raised to the window, and a jet from a hydrant was got to work.

“We got the ladder up to the attic window,” said Superintendent Breaks, “but it was useless to try and get into the bedroom window owing to the heat from below, I tried to get in the attic, window but could not do so. We got the water on and I tried again with a jet of water to try and push me in and cool it down a bit.”

## Firemen's Heroic Efforts

Replying to the Deputy Coroner, Superintendent Breaks said he could have got through the window because he had experience of similar windows and was rather slim. He would have

had to slide in sideways.

“I had to come down the ladder rather quickly on account of the heat” he said. “I could not speak to tell Second Officer Cornish to have a try, but I motioned and let him know that it was his turn. He tried but did not succeed and when he got down, he could speak but he let Fireman Gregory know that he had to try. He too was unsuccessful.

“Then Mr. Jenkinson called from his upper window that they were trying to get through the wall so firemen went upstairs and made a large hole in the wall.

“When I got through the hole the heat was intense, although there was no fire in the room I crawled over to the woman and a fireman came in, and we looked for the baby. We were crawling about because we could not see. We found she was dead and so we left her there until the fire was out.”

Deputy Coroner: You realised you could not save their lives and therefore you had to save the adjoining houses? -Yes.

Superintendent Breaks was questioned as to what he believed was the cause of the fire. It was possible, he agreed with the Deputy Coroner, that the hearth rug caught fire through a spark or a piece of coal. He had not found anything else likely but there was actually no evidence to show the cause of fire. It might have been a spark thrown out from bad coal.

## Death Trap Windows

The Superintendent added that Mrs. Morton would probably have saved herself if she had fastened herself up in her bedroom. This was another fire where life would probably have been saved if the person concerned had had the presence of mind to shut herself up in the room, and so shut out the fire.

The Deputy Coroner suggested that the woman might have been able to save herself if she could have flung herself through a window.

“Do you think I these are proper windows for us to possess in this city?” he asked.

Superintendent Breaks: No. It is impossible for anyone to get out.

The Deputy Coroner: I shall ask the jury to condemn them in a rider. I do not think they are fit windows to have in such habitations. She was a big woman, of about 14 stones in weight, and she could not have got through the window.

Referring to the windows the Deputy Coroner said, “They are death traps.”

At the request of the Deputy Coroner, photographs taken by the “Star” photographer were produced in court. These showed the building and windows and were inspected by the jury.

Arthur Earnest Keenan, mortuary attendant, expressed the opinion that Mrs. Morton and baby died from burns. He said Mrs. Morton was a well-built woman, who he thought, would weigh between 14 and 16 stones.

## Owners Agreement

Mr. S. Lawton, of the firm of Fisher, Harrison and Co., Ltd., Trafalgar Street, was in court representing the owners of the property. Addressing him, the Deputy Coroner said: "We are going to condemn your windows."

Mr. Lawton: I quite agree.

Mr. Lawton added that he would like to speak of the wonderful way in which the Fire Brigade did its work. "They did everything humanly possible," he said.

He added that he was very sorry, for the neighbours in Trafalgar Street, for hundreds persons had been to see the burnt out house and had made remarks about "neighbours allowing the woman to be burnt next door." They were very unkind remarks.

The Deputy Coroner said there was a good deal of ignorance in the world, and "fools rushed in where angels feared to tread."

Mr. Lawton added that the neighbours could not have done anything, as when they knew of the fire the bottom room was like a blazing furnace.

Summing up, the Deputy Coroner said the jurymen had seen photographs of the house and had heard of the build of the woman. If the houses were to be repaired, were they going to allow similar windows to be put in? Surely, it was their duty to say that they considered that the windows were such that an occupant of the house could not possibly get out.

In returning the verdict, the foreman, and the jury said they thought it would have been possible to save life if there had been a window big enough for the woman to get through. They also wished to express their great sympathy with the relatives of the deceased and also to express appreciation of the way the Fire Brigade worked. Nothing more could possibly have been done.

The formal, verdict was that "Mrs. Morton and the baby Florence died from extensive burns to the whole body: that such burns were sustained by the house becoming ignited on the ground floor, and that there was no evidence as to the origin of the fire." A rider stated that the jury considered that the type of window at the house prevented the deceased from escaping, and they condemned the use of such windows in similar houses.

The jury also expressed appreciation of the excellent work of the Fire Brigade.