

910. *Hon. Mr. Stout.*] What scale is this plan?—A chain to an inch.

911. *Mr. Reid.*] Is there any average width of pillar?—They are very uneven; I should have to measure them all to take them out.

912. From your experience as a mining engineer, do you consider that the safest method of working the mine?—No; not under the circumstances.

913. What leads you to consider that it was unsafe?—Because there is no pillar left in some places, there is nothing left to support the roof in other places, and it would set the weight on to the weaker ones.

914. Were you aware of the amount of cover overhead?—No; not at that time.

915. Did you observe any falls in the mine?—Yes.

916. Can you tell us what these had been caused by, in your opinion?—By taking out the coal.

917. Yes; but what was the immediate cause? Of course, if there had been no coal taken out there would have been no holes in the ground, but that is not what I am asking you: I am asking you if you know, what was the immediate cause of the falls: can you state what was the cause?—I suppose the air.

918. *The Chairman.*] Were the falls owing to any improper working or anything of that sort; I suppose that is what Mr. Reid means?—Some of the places had no doubt fallen from too much coal being taken out; others, I suppose, had come down from natural causes. In some narrow places the coal will come down.

919. *Mr. Reid.*] While you were down there, did you ever see any one working at the pillars or working near the pillars?—I think I saw one man. I did not take any notice of things. I simply made a survey of the mine.

920. You could not recollect?—No.

921. What, in your opinion, would be the effect of letting water into that mine and allowing the place to fill: would it have a tendency to bring down the roof, or would it have a tendency to support the roof?—If left in, it would have a tendency to keep the roof up; if taken out, it would be injurious to the mine after it had been filled.

922. I was not asking you about taking out the water, but what would be the effect of allowing water to accumulate in the mine?—It would assist to keep the roof up.

923. How so?—By the pressure or weight.

924. Would not the water have some effect in disintegrating the roof, or would the pressure counterbalance the disintegrating?—I think the pressure would have a tendency to keep it up more than to bring it down.

925. Then, in your opinion, the danger would be in drawing the water off and allowing the air to get in to the roof?—Yes.

926. So long as the water was allowed to remain in, it would have a tendency to support the roof?—Yes.

927. Did you notice the general condition of the mine when you were in it in February—of course you must have made a survey—but had you your attention drawn to any particular state of the mine at that time by any one?—No; no farther than that I had to put on everything I could see—any falls, any accumulation of dross, &c.

928. No; I am asking you whether your attention was drawn to the state of the mine at that time, by any one, as to the roof, or the sides, or the pillars, or the floor, or anything with reference to the state of the mine, or did your own vision show you the state of the mine?—Well, I could not answer it exactly.

929. Well, I will ask the question, with the permission of the Chairman, in this way: did you notice any subsidence or creep in the mine at that time?—I noticed a creep on one occasion.

930. *Hon. Mr. Stout.*] Can you point out on the plan where that was?—I can point to one or two places, but could not say which one it was. It was there (pointing to the plan), but I could not say which place it was.

931. *Mr. Reid.*] Some of the witnesses have stated that the best plan to adopt in that mine, where it was creepy, and where falls were taking place, was to have packed it: do you think that packing would have been more expeditious or more expedient than allowing the mine to fill with water, or was packing practicable?—It was practicable in some places, but others were fallen at the time. I do not know how high the falls were, whether they could have been packed; I could not get into them. I do not think they could have been packed all over.

932. Do you think that packing would have been preferable to allowing the water in—that is what I am asking you—or do you think that the water would have had an equal power in sustaining the roof?—There were places where it could not be packed, and it would have fallen.

933. Then, you could not say?—It could not be done.

934. Did you ever make a survey for Mr. Loudon?—Yes.

935. He has given evidence with reference to your style of working: did he give you any special instructions in reference to that survey? He has stated that your method of surveying that mine was in many respects to take a point and run a line through: he said it was very good outside work, but your practice was to run a straight line through and not to show inequalities of the working: was that your practice in reference to that survey, and what reason had you for adopting that practice, if you had any?—When I was engaged by Mr. Loudon I asked him if he wanted a detailed survey of all the places, or only to go round the faces—that is, the extreme points—and draw the places through from one to another. He said he would have it done that way, and it was.

936. *The Chairman.*] As being less expensive?—Yes; it was done to satisfy Mr. Binns.

937. *Mr. Chapman.*] You made the plan, and you say that an error was pointed out to you in your field-book before you made the plan, and you rectified it?—Yes.

938. Do you remember what amount that error was?—6 links.

939. Was there not an error of 5ft. or 6ft.?—It was 4ft.

940. Was there not a difference between 15ft. and 21ft. or 16ft. and 21ft.?—I do not remember.