

156. You say the greatest force was in this incline. In the further away places what did you find?—In inclines 5 and 6 I found indications of a strong blast. Then, it appeared to have found its way past No. 6 into No. 7, because six bodies were found there. The last man found had evidently run about thirty or forty yards from the middle level.

157. You think they had then some slight warning, and were able to run some little distance?—My idea is that they heard this shot when it blew out, because there were none of those men in No. 5 and No. 6 inclines, who were in the working-places when we got them. They were all out in the incline.

158. Was there any reason that they should have left their work?—No.

159. They would have been at work an hour and a-half?—Yes.

160. They would not be resting?—No; the attitudes showed that they were running out of the places, and had had some warning, and might have heard the explosion of the blown-out shot. That would blow the lights out.

161. Did you find any of their lights near where the men were?—I do not remember picking any lamps up.

162. Did you notice if the lights were where they had been working?—Some of them were.

163. Do you know what kind of lights were used at the time of the explosion? We were told they were naked lights?—Yes.

164. What kind of lights do you use in your mine?—Naked lights.

165. Did you ever have an explosion of fire-damp?—No; we have found no gas at all in our mine so far.

166. And you think it quite safe to use naked lights?—Yes.

167. Have you much dry coal-dust in your mine?—No; it is fairly damp. There is always a certain amount of water, which keeps it damp.

168. Have you examined the ventilation of the Brunner Mine since the explosion?—I only know what we did while inspecting the bords after the explosion.

169. Do you know whether it was sufficient for the adequate and safe working of the mine?—Yes, all that is required.

170. Do you know in any way that it could be improved?—No.

171. It has been suggested that there might be an outlet at each end of the mine, or another intake, and an outlet at each end. How would that do with a mine which was progressing inwardly?—The Brunner Mine, as far as I can see, is not progressing inwardly. They have gone as far as they intend to go, as far as I can see.

172. Do you think it would add to the safety of the miners if they had another outlet?—I do not think so in this particular case. If you had had half a dozen shafts you could not have saved a man. I could imagine that a man who could run only thirty yards has not much chance of getting out.

173. He would not find any place where the explosion would have less affect than in another place?—No; in fact, in one place we found the shovels standing on the rib-side where the wind could have blown them over.

174. So that the explosion had no force there, but the men were simply killed by the after-damp?—Yes.

175. Did you examine the stoppings?—There were none left when I went in; all had been blown out.

176. Do you know what crib stoppings are?—Yes, crib-log stoppings.

177. Seven feet I think, between the cribs?—Yes.

178. Do you think that adequate for stoppings?—Yes, quite of the best for that particular mine, or for any mine on the West Coast, on account of the roof dropping, and the floor rising and squeezing the crib-stopping, and making them air-tight.

179. If you had bricks would not they crush and cause a leakage?—Yes.

180. And boards would do likewise?—Yes.

181. Did you notice the machinery of the mine for ordinary working?—Yes, it is an ordinarily equipped mine.

182. All the appliances being of the usual kind?—Yes; and the best, as far as I could see.

183. Can you give us, shortly, the result of your examination of the mine, and what in your opinion led to the explosion?—I have already said that there was strong evidence that it occurred through this blown-out shot in No. 4 bord, which would raise a heavy cloud of dust where it struck the ground, then, of course, the heavy cloud of dust would be immediately followed by the flame, which would cause inflammation in the next bord [indicated]. This is evident by the excessive coking which has taken place in that particular place. Then there are indications that it has travelled that way and this way [indicated], and in no other place in the mine did I see the same evidence. Then, the blast has evidently come down to No. 3, and up the workings along the bottom level to No. 2, and No. 1, and then across here [indicated], because we find tubs of coal jammed up on that side. The force has spent itself at the sump, because we find no evidence of any flame in that portion of the mine. The road being wet has killed the flame.

184. I understand you to say that the damp parts of the mine were the least affected by the flame?—Yes, because there was always a certain amount of water trickling down the main dip. We found a great quantity of fine dust lying on the floor where the flame, as a general rule, never appeared to have consumed it. No fire had reached the top of the main incline, as we found in the motor-house a boy who had not been touched by fire at all. The boy did not appear to have been burnt, although every stitch of his clothes was blown off. On the top of the main incline a young fellow was found with his clothes blown off, and not at all burnt. All these indications lead one to suppose that the flame had only gone up a certain distance.

185. There was some question raised as to watering the mine?—Do you mean to damp the coal-dust?