

314. But a great number of those would be killed by the after-damp?—I do not think more than half a dozen would be. I think that the force of the explosion killed the lot, excepting those farthest in.

315. You say the resultant gas allowed your lamp to burn? Do you consider that this gas may have been produced by a coal-dust explosion?—Yes.

316. If you had a sufficient amount of nitrogen in the after-damp, would not your light burn in it quite easily?—No.

317. I think you are confounding choke-damp with after-damp?—No, I am not. Choke-damp or black-damp is simply carbonic acid. After-damp contains about 9 per cent. of carbonic acid.

318. Will not your light burn in it?—Not in that amount of carbonic acid.

319. I think a light will burn in after-damp?—It will burn in the after-damp of a coal-dust explosion.

320. You say the fireman examines all the places before the men go into them?—Yes.

321. I suppose he does not examine every face in the mine, but only those to be worked at?—That will depend on the Inspector, as far as he is concerned. During the day, the over-men inspect and examine each and every place in the mine.

322. So that an accumulation of gas might take place in one bord where the men were working and not be known to the fireman?—Granted; but no workman would be expected to go on working, but to come out.

323. A man might be working in his bord, and the gas accumulating somewhere else without its reaching him?—Unless in particular instances.

324. You do not think every bord and face ought to be inspected in the morning?—You would have to have three or four men travelling around all night, I think such an inspection would be useless. He would have to go all round the mine, including the rise workings.

325. Not if they were properly stopped?—If there was any gas accumulating, it would always go to the rise-workings.

326. But you would stop your workings when you had finished them, so that he would really only have to examine the working-places, where work was actually going on?—He is supposed to examine all the working-places, and those connected with them—that is, the jigs, inclines, and levels.

327. You know that an accumulation of gas sufficient to blow a mine up can take place in an hour?—From a blower?

328. Yes. Would not he find the blower when he went round during his inspection?—If he did not, it would make itself known if it was anywhere near where the man was travelling, because it has a bubbling sound.

329. You assume that the blower was not near where the fireman was travelling, but where some men were working. It might show itself in some bords where the men were not working?—It might.

330. You do not think, as a matter of fact, that all the bords should be examined before the men go to work?—No, because it would be simply a waste of time.

331. *Mr. Park.*] Did you see any tools for laying trams about that particular bord?—None of any description.

332. We had some talk about section 40 of the Act. I will read it to you, so that you will understand what I mean: "Within one year after commencing the working of any bords, stalls, or long-wall workings in any mine, there shall be made and completed at least two separate and distinct shafts or outlets to the surface from such mine, intercommunicating with each other, so that such shafts or outlets shall afford a separate means of ingress or egress available to the persons employed in such mine. Such shafts must not, if made after the commencement of this Act, be nearer than 50ft. to each other. Proper apparatus for raising or lowering persons at each such shaft shall be kept on the works of the mine, and, if not in actual use at the shafts, shall be so kept as to be quickly available for use." What is meant by "inter-communicating with each other"?—I should take it to mean that each of those stentons must be driven over; and that in certain portions of the mine certain doors must be put in so that you can get from the intake into the return.

333. You were asked if 50ft. would be sufficient. Would you suggest anything more?—I do not think that it is necessary. The English Act makes it 15yds. I think our section is ample.

334. Coming to the blower, can a blower take place in a solid face?—You might strike it in driving.

335. As well as in the working?—In driving a level you might strike a blower.

336. Is a blower likely to occur in the old workings?—I do not think so.

337. There would be no danger in the old workings?—I do not think so.

338. If it occurred in a working-place, the men could get notice of it from the noise?—Yes.

339. Would the noise give notice to the men at a distance?—It would depend upon the amount giving off.

340. If it were a big one it would be more dangerous than a small one?—It would be more dangerous, but there would be more noise.

341. The more noise there was, the more dangerous it would be?—I should assume so.

342. *Mr. Beare.*] You say the stoppings have been blown out, and therefore the best return-airway you could have would have made no difference. Supposing the stoppings had not been blown out, do you consider the return-airway was in fair condition, and of adequate dimensions?—Yes.

343. Do you think that practical and experienced miners working in the mine would have had a difficulty in finding their way out?—I do not think so. It is fairly well defined as a return.

344. I think you also gave a description of the coke-dust and coal which was on the rails. I suppose you would expect this in case of a gas-explosion?—Not in a case of a pure gas-explosion.