

had forced it back, because it showed indications coming upwards, and those indications are stronger coming back than the blast shows going in.

90. There is clear evidence of a back-lash, do you not think?—Yes.

91. And there is slight charring on the props, but no fire?—Yes.

92. Then, apparently there has been no flame entering; but you think you found a little gas at the face. Could that be ignited?—There had been enough flame going in to ignite this gas.

93. But not to show any trace?—It did not leave any.

94. Where did you go next?—We travelled into the dip, came back and finished. We went around the top workings at the cabin and tension-wheel. We examined the bottom level on the west side. We found that a very strong blast had gone in the lowest level. We found trucks knocked away.

95. Did the blast appear to get less and less as it travelled westward?—Yes, westward and upward.

96. Practically, I suppose, there were no signs of it as it got west?—No.

97. Did you examine the mid-level?—Yes. We also went up the back dip to the dam, and the whole indications were that the blast had come in from the east side of the dip, and had blown the stoppings out. These were partly replaced since the explosion in order to allow us to get in, and for the purpose of keeping up the ventilation. At the dam we found a very small place to conduct the air through.

98. That is where you found a place 6ft. by 1½ft.?—Yes; it is not an overcast, it is simply a dam.

99. What is the size of that dam?—I did not measure. I measured the size of the place the air went through.

100. How did you get through this air-return?—The air has to go over the top of the dam, and the dam is to stop the water coming down, and to make it easier to pump.

101. How does the air cross the dam?—The water is pumped back within 2ft. of the top, and the air has only this 2ft. to go over.

102. Is there no other way that you can get through, or the air?—So far as I know it is the only way.

103. Are there not two dams?—Yes.

104. Is not there the same opening in both? Did you examine both?—Yes; but I did not notice any air about that one at all.

105. There were two dams, and the same opening over both?—There are two dams, but I did not take much notice of the second one.

106. Did you go through that 18in. place?—No; there was water on the other side.

107. Which way did you come?—We came back, and up the main dip, and round the pillar into the next level.

108. Then you went along the crib-level, following the air-return?—Yes.

109. To an undercast? Which way did you go?—We went in right along to the end of No. 10 incline—right into the old workings along the mid-level to No. 10 rise—going occasionally through the slits, and into this back level.

110. Did you find anything particular there?—That is all we saw.

111. You found the blast getting weaker and weaker as you approached the old workings?—Yes.

112. Did you examine anything further?—All the old workings, falls and goafs. We found the indication near the goaf very slight, and inside this level [indicated] there was no force apparently.

113. You know some of the dead bodies were found there?—Yes.

114. Did you travel back from the air-course, or what did you do?—We started from the inside, and went up the other places as far as we could get into the old workings. The indications were not strong there until we came back to No. 6.

115. The force has practically followed the return-airway?—In some parts, and in some parts it had not. It is very difficult to know where the air-current is in some parts there.

116. *Mr. Proud.*] Was it very feeble?—Yes, on the top of this incline it was very feeble.

117. *Mr. Park.*] Did you go up No. 5 incline?—Yes; there is more fire shown up No. 5 incline than in any other part of that side.

118. Did you see any signs of the force meeting there?—There was coal in that corner as if it had driven it into the grain of the props.

119. In what direction had it travelled?—Up No. 5 incline, and right to the top. There were also signs of some very severe firing in Nos. 1, 2, and 3 bords. We were going to go back from the face of one of these bords to the return, when one of the roadmen said they did not travel this way as it was not fit to travel. He told us that we had better take another one. We came back to the level, went under the undercast, and into the return.

120. Can you say whether the force had worked from the main dip to the westward in most cases?—All the way up it had. We went up through most of the workings until we came to behind the dynamo. We found there a very strong force had blown the bricks away.

121. Did you notice any indication of fire going into the main dip from the west side?—None at all.

122. And you say that at the dynamo the force seemed to have expended itself?—Yes.

123. Was the dynamo about the last indication shown of the force?—Yes; we found solid lumps of brickwork stuck together 20 yards or 30 yards away from the dynamo. Outside of that there was very little indication.

124. What was the size of the brickwork you saw?—About 1 yard square and one brick in thickness.

125. How much would that be?—4½in.