

126. Of course, you understand the return-airway?—Yes.

127. Had you to crawl in any particular place, or was there sufficient room for you to get through?—I do not think I had to crawl. Some places are rather small, and you had to pull yourself together a bit in getting through.

128. Anyhow, you can manage to get along?—Yes.

129. Any coal-miner could get through very easily?—Yes.

*The Chairman* : It depends on the size of the coal-miner.

131. *Mr. Park*.] The current of air in this return is strong most of the way, with the exception of about a chain, where you found it a little weak?—Yes, in the return it is strong; but there was no difficulty in finding which way the air was going.

132. Is there a strong current of air down through the faces of the east workings?—The air is not bad down there.

133. And the only place you think the return is a little weak is in the west workings, near Nos. 5 and 6 inclines?—Yes.

134. You know something about stoppings. What do you think of the stoppings in this mine?—They are mostly brattice-cloth.

135. From the main dip are they mostly brattice-cloth?—I could not say, because the brattice is further on, inside of that. Where the stopping had been blown away and not replaced it was brattice. Regarding the main dip, I could not say.

136. Do you think that brattice-cloth would have been sufficient for stoppings for the bords near the main dip?—Perfectly sufficient if looked after. The bords do not go from the main dip.

137. What do you call those places [indicated on plan]?—Stentons or slits.

138. You know that they used crib-logging?—There was very little left; it was all blown away.

139. And brattice-cloth would have been blown away all the same?—Oh, yes.

140. No ordinary stoppings would have resisted the force of that blast?—I do not think so.

141. How long is it since you worked in a mine?—About seven years.

142. Have you worked in the Brunner?—I have worked in them all.

143. What experience had you as a miner or deputy? Were you ever a deputy in any mine?—I was deputy in the Wallsend.

144. What was the coal brought down with in the Wallsend Mine?—As a rule with gunpowder.

145. And was it a different mine to the Brunner?—It gave out a little more gas.

146. And still you used gunpowder for blasting?—Yes; we did try gelanite.

147. What do you say about the Brunner Mine? Was it safe or unsafe?—I should say it was a very safe mine.

148. Was it worked fairly well?—I think so.

149. *Mr. Guinness*.] Could you tell by your examination of the blown-out shot-hole whether that shot had been recently discharged?—No; how could you? It is all charred so that there are no indications left. I would not swear that somebody had not done some work at that shot after it was fired.

150. From the indications, you say that it is impossible to say whether it was a recently discharged shot or not?—Yes.

151. You noticed stronger indications of the force going up from the lower workings than going down?—Yes, decidedly.

152. Can you give any opinion as to whether that would be caused by a rebound, assuming that there was a blast at this blown-out shot, and that it had expended itself until it came to the lower end of the workings? There was a slight quantity of gas found in the lower workings. Would not the explosion cause a greater rebound back, and then shoot down?—It would all depend upon the quantity of gas found there.

153. Would the theory I suggest to you be correct?—It might be correct if enough gas were found to cause the rebound.

154. It is seven years since you worked in the Brunner Mine?—Yes; I cannot say that I worked in the rise part of that mine. It is nine years since I worked in the Brunner.

155. Was there much gas found in the workings, or any?—Very little, and nothing of consequence.

156. You have not been in the mine since?—Not into the Brunner Mine until after the explosion.

157. Do you remember what days you went in?—I was in on the 4th of April and the three following days. One day we missed. We were in on the 4th, 5th, 7th and 8th of April.

158. *Mr. Beare*.] You were working in the Wallsend Mine some seven or eight years ago?—Yes.

159. That was a mine containing more gas than the Brunner?—Yes.

160. What sort of stoppings were used near the faces in the Wallsend Mine?—Similar to the Brunner—brattice-cloth.

161. As a miner of experience you can say that there was no mismanagement or any bad material in the Brunner Mine—that is, in regard to stoppings?—I am not in a position to say, because the brattice-cloth stoppings were all blown away.

162. Did you see the temporary bratticing? Was it not the same sort of brattice-cloth that was used in the Wallsend Mine, and which was considered sufficient, notwithstanding the Wallsend had more gas in it?—Yes.

163. As a practical miner, from your examination of the mine, you saw nothing to find great objection to as regards the management and materials used?—No.

164. And the return-airway, a miner could get through readily enough?—Yes; there was nothing to stop him, but it would be a bit complicated if there was no one to show him the way.