

285. There would be an abundance of air along the lowest level?—Yes.

286. If an accumulation of gas suddenly burst out there, how far would it go?—It would make for this point [indicated].

287. Would it be cleared out by the air?—If it were cleared out it would go back to the shaft, and the bord would be filled up with air.

288. Were there any great falls in the roof in which the gas could lodge, or would the gas naturally ascend the workings?—The gas would naturally ascend from the falls, and, if not checked, there would be a great accumulation.

289. If there was an accumulation, would that accumulation be found going upwards?—It would get into the return-airway.

290. If it was a large accumulation of gas, it must have been very sudden. Had you any reason to think there was any great cavity which would allow the gas to accumulate, when its natural tendency was to ascend to the roof, where it would meet the air and be sucked up?—I have no idea what it would do.

291. What was the obstacle which caused the severity of the blast at this place [indicated on plan]? You say it there met an obstacle which made the return-air current feeble?—The force went up very strongly until it met the old workings on the edge of the goaf, and there it practically died out. You could see further than you liked to go without a plan; you did not dare to enter far into it.

292. Is it possible there was any dust and gas along the edges of the goaf?—There was a certain amount of dust from the fall.

293. Damp or dry?—Dry.

294. In the goaf?—I should think as a rule the goafs are generally damp.

295. Did you find any sign of gas along here [indicated]?—I found no sign of gas, but there may have been some in the goaf, in the old workings.

296. Are there any very large falls in the goaf?—I never got into the goaf. As soon as you get to it you have to stop.

297. Did the return rise parallel with the dip? Was it much damaged?—No; there were falls in some places.

298. Props and brattice blown from the cross-ways?—They were probably there before the explosion. That part has not been worked for some time.

299. How far were these strong props in?—They were all blown from here [indicated].

300. Were they blown a yard away or farther up?—We did not find anything solid.

301. You had to climb over them?—No, they did not impede us; they were all scattered.

302. Do you not often find shot-holes left in a mine which had been bored and never fired?—In rare cases you might find a shot sometimes.

303. Supposing a deputy thought a shot had been improperly placed, and had refused to allow it to be fired, what would happen in such a case?—If it were a working-place he would make the man undercut it. It would be left, but would be fired afterwards.

304. I understand you to say that in so much solid coal there is not much chance of finding a blower?—Where you are going into fresh coal all the time any of the old workings and goaf will give off a few blowers. I have always found a big blower in the solid workings.

305. *Mr. Proud.*] You said you considered the return-airway was practicable?—Yes.

306. And that on one side the air-current is feeble?—Yes; I believe the whole of the return-air does not go over the dam; I think it went up in the centre, where it is 2ft. 3in. wide by 4ft. high.

307. You also considered the air sufficient in the other workings to clear away any gas?—On that side there was sufficient scour to clear it away, but there was no gas there.

308. Would you describe how you tested for gas?—We used the Davy lamp.

309. What did you see?—When we got to the top of these falls [indicated] you could very nearly get the gas up to the top of the lamp. We found these indications a little over 2ft. from the roof.

310. From your observations, do you think the force of the explosion came from the lower places?—Yes, it came upwards.

311. You did not see any props blown out?—There were props blown off in the back inclines and Nos. 1, 2, and 3 slits. They were all blown out. Nothing was blown down in the middle.

312. *Mr. Skellon.*] You say there are some falls in the return?—Yes.

313. Could you get over them?—Yes.

314. In case of an accident, could a man without a lamp find his way through?—I do not think he would. As an instance of that, I might say that when we were going through we had three arguments as to which was the direction.

315. Would any practical miner, intending to rob a pillar, put a shot in in the direction this one is indicated on the plan? Would it not cause a loud explosion, and bring the deputy round?—I could not say. I would not care about doing it. If I wanted to get a bit of easy coal I would go where I could break it off with a pick.

316. Was there any holing done for this shot?—Yes, the coal is undermined slightly.

317. You do not think any man would try to rob a pillar by putting a hole in there [indicated]?—I would not care about doing it.

318. Would any practical man do it?—He would be very foolish if he did.

319. You say that the indications pointed to the explosion having come up from below the water?—Yes.

320. If safety-lamps were being used in one bord, would it be safe to use naked lights in the next?—It depends upon the quantity of gas being given off.

321. If a little were given off, there might be a large quantity given off within a short time?—Yes; I should think that the deputy in charge, if he had the slightest idea that there was gas giving