

180. *Sir J. Hector.*] You say there is charring about the blown-out hole?—It is a burnt "char."

181. Was the coal burnt deeply?—Yes, for a good space.

182. How deep?—Some one stuck a knife into it, and it was 3in. deep, and some of it was only 1½in.

183. If it were 1½in. deep, every yard of surface would give over a cubic foot of burnt coal?—I do not know anything about cubic measurement.

184. There would be a considerable quantity?—Yes.

185. Was it burnt to coke?—Thoroughly.

186. If it were thoroughly burnt it would give off 10,000ft. or 11,000ft. of gas to the ton; and, if that gas could not be consumed, would it not travel along with the force of the explosion? Would not that be a natural source for the gas to come from with which to burn other places when it met naked lights where the men were working?—I cannot understand you.

187. You say there was a gas explosion in No. 5?—Yes.

187A. Where do you think that came from?—From Nos. 1 and 2 below.

188. Were you ever in this mine when they were working in this bord (No. 5)?—I never worked there; I worked on the opposite side.

189. Did you know of gas having been found there?—No.

190. Would it not strike you as curious if gas were suddenly to appear in these two distant places [indicated] on the same morning for the first time in any quantity?—Yes.

191. If it could be shown that a large quantity of gas must have been suddenly produced, and that it had swept rapidly up the face and been carried in various directions through the mine, and when it reached the miners who were at work there was a gas explosion, would not that account for the matter?—Yes.

192. Therefore, all you would require would be a large quantity of gas, and for it to travel rapidly through the mine?—Yes.

193. Would that fit in with your theory?—It would burn up everything going along with it.

194. You cannot say from anything you saw that there is any place where gas could accumulate at the lower end of Nos. 5 and 6 bords?—Yes; in one of two places.

195. How?—There are two blind bords—there is a stopping here and a stopping there [indicated], which allow no air to get into it.

196. What are those stoppings made of?—One is of stone, and the other of canvas.

197. That is to allow a certain amount of air to work in?—It is to allow the air to get through.

198. *Mr. Proud.*] I think you said that you never worked in any part of the pit that was considered dangerous on account of firedamp?—No.

199. You say that you have seen a blown-out shot. How far did you see the flame going back?—About 10 or 12 yards.

200. You think that the force of the explosion came up from the lower workings?—Yes, from below.

201. I think that you said the air was not carried along the working-faces?—Only when I went in to look for bodies.

202. While you were working down there, did you consider the air was carried round the working-faces?—Yes.

203. I suppose you could not work coal without firing gunpowder or some other explosive?—Not according to my idea.

204. *Mr. Skellon.*] You said that if a man were going to make a hole in No. 4 bord he would take his drill with him. Would not he want a pick as well to stamp the hole?—It would depend upon if he wanted to make a hole.

205. If he had to bore a hole he would want his drill?—Yes.

206. Did you notice in that bord whether the tram-line is not laid close to the pillar so the trucks could not get up to the shot-hole?—Yes.

207. Instead of firing that shot, would it not be more likely that a man, if he wanted to get coals from there, would strip underneath so as to get his truck close up and pick the coal into the truck at once?—I do not think it would be easy for him to do so. It would be easier for him to take it all down and fill it into the truck.

208. If he put a shot in there he might bring the top coal down, but then he would have to fill it all out before he could get at his bottoms?—The coal is partly holed on the bottom and only bored in the face. [Witness indicated on the plan where the shot was holed.]

209. Have you ever seen slack piled up on each side of the rails?—Yes.

210. Do you not think that would be likely to cause a dust explosion, having the slack piled up on each side?—Yes, if there is such a thing as a dust explosion.

211. You say the men were working the pillars that morning?—Yes.

212. Was not Brislane's a fast place?—No.

213. You said the Act provides for 100 cubic feet of air for each man round the working-places?—Yes.

214. I would like to read you the clause of the Act regarding this matter, as I would like the miners' attention drawn to it: "An adequate amount of ventilation shall mean not less than 100 cubic feet of pure air per minute for each man and youth, horse, pony, donkey, or mule, which shall sweep undiminished along the airway to each working-place"—not "round the working-face."

JAMES WARD re-examined.

215. *Mr. Joyce.*] When I asked you a question about the ventilation of the mine, I wanted to know where the air was split at the present time. Can you show me on this plan [produced] where the air was split previous to the explosion?—I cannot swear to it, but only where I was led to believe it was split. [Witness indicated on plan where he thought the air was split.]