

297. Was it always the case, when you were working in the mine, in bords joining the air-course, to use naked lights?—I have worked in that part of the mine with a naked light when the men above me were working with lamps.

298. Do you think that would be a good precaution?—I am not prepared to say.

299. What was done with the slack when you were working in the mine?—It was filled into the trucks.

299A. And the coal-dust?—It would accumulate by travelling backwards and forwards.

300. Did it ever cover the rails?—Occasionally it did. Close to the rib-side in the middle bord it was very seldom covered. It was quite possible the truck of coal would not get down, and then the dust would be shifted to either side.

301. What did they do with the dust from the flat sheets?—They threw it down the incline. We did not take it out of the mine.

302. You have examined this mine since. Did you find any large body of gas in it?—Yes; I found a good deal of gas about Pattinson's place, on top of a fall in a bord in Pattinson's place. We got 2ft.

303. Anywhere else?—This was after the explosion and after the ventilation was restored, from two to four days after we got all the men out. I was in Pattinson's place, and we got gas in the top or the sump-level, about 2ft. of it, tailing back for 3 or 4 yards. I saw a little gas on top of the fall about Worthley's place. There was only just a "draw" there.

304. You know the air-regulator over the dam?—Yes.

305. Do you think that is sufficiently good for the purpose intended?—Yes, if there is enough force behind it.

306. Do you think under ordinary circumstances there is enough force behind it?—I am not a judge of fans.

307. Do you not think it would be better to have the air-regulator made larger?—I said I am not a judge of fans.

308. Did you ever see the Inspector going round the faces when he was in the mine?—Yes.

309. Do you know if he ever measured the air at the faces?—I never saw him do that.

310. *Mr. Park.*] You say that it was safe enough in your opinion to use naked lights in Hunter's bord, although they might be using safeties in Brislané's bord because they were doing pillarwork?—Yes.

311. I think in taking out the pillars there is not nearly the risk from gas that there is in driving in the face when working the bords?—That is so. They are not cutting any fresh feeders.

312. If there had been feeders they would have blown out during the working of the bords?—Yes.

313. Then the mine had practically passed the dangerous stage—if it ever had any—is that so?—The most dangerous stage in my opinion.

314. It has been stated here that when safeties are once given they are not withdrawn for a good while afterwards, until the gas was thoroughly cleared out. Is that statement correct?—Yes.

315. Does the fact that the miners had been at work in the mine over an hour indicate that the fireman had been round and examined the faces?—Yes.

316. And from your knowledge of Roberts and Morris, you think they had done their duty that morning?—Morris had been round that part of the mine that morning I know, because I saw him there.

317. In reference to this air-regulator, is it not used for the purpose of splitting the air and distributing on either side?—I did not know it was an air-regulator at all. I thought there was just a dam there, and that the regulator carried the air over the dam.

318. If the hole were not there, would there not have been too much air taken from one side and allowed to get weaker on the other?—Quite likely.

319. Your opinion was that shot was fired when the bord was being driven. You said it was most likely put in when the bord was being driven, and the manager or overman most likely prevented its being fired?—No, I did not say that.

320. When they chalked that shot off, would they have stopped the men from firing it?—It was quite likely they would.

321. It is quite likely when the bord was being driven that the hole was left without the shot being fired?—That is more than I can say. My opinion is that the hole was fired when the bord was being driven. The hole has been fired to a certainty, because there is a part blown off on the collar—about 2ft., from the look of the hole.

322. To a certainty it has been fired, you say. Can you say when?—No.

323. Have you noticed the ventilation of the mine since the explosion?—Yes; it is very good since the explosion.

324. And you say that the ventilation is sufficient to carry away all the gas, but not the powder-smoke?—That was eighteen months ago.

325. Eighteen months ago it was able to clear away the gas, but not the powder-smoke?—I did not try to see if the gas was carried away or not. I know that the smoke would still hang in our place.

326. You think the ventilation is better now than it was eighteen months ago?—Yes.

327. Have the management ever refused to put up brattice?—No; it was put up the time it was asked for. If a man put up brattice, and if he had not air, he would keep it well up the working-face.

328. *Mr. Guinness.*] Have you ever had any experience in coal-dust explosions?—No; I have seen small gas explosions in the Coalpit Heath.

329. Did you make any observations after the gas explosions? What were the effects on the roof or walls?—I never saw a gas explosion severe enough to show any effects.

330. Had you any fault to find with any of the bratticing in this mine?—I never examined it.