

371. Did you ever work in the dip-workings of the Brunner Mine?—Yes, ever since it started.

372. When did you last work there?—Yesterday, and the day before the explosion. I came out the night before at 6 o'clock.

373. During the period which you were working there, did you personally ever find gas in the dip?—Only in small quantities.

374. You know during the period you were in the mine that gas had been found there often in dangerous quantities?—Not in dangerous quantities. Some that would perhaps burn a man.

375. I think there was enough to kill a man on one occasion?—There was at the time they were going through the fault. He died from the effects of the explosion.

*Sir J. Hector* : In the dip workings?—No ; at the time they were going through the fault.

376. *Mr. Joyce*.] Do you know the tramway in the fourth board?—Yes.

377. Did you lay the rails?—I laid the rails close up to the slit about a fortnight or three weeks before the explosion.

378. Did you know if any working-place was going to be made there?—Not in that bord ; the first working-place would have been the bord above it, I should have thought.

379. You say that from your experience as a roadman?—From my experience as a deputy.

380. Therefore, in No. 4 bord there would not have been likely to be any place where a man would come in to work within a day or two?—I do not think they would put a man to work there for some weeks to come.

381. While you were laying the rails in this bord, did you make an examination of it?—I did not make any examination—only to see what line I should take the road in the construction of the face.

382. Did you find any blown-out shot?—I never examined it closely. I just looked forward, and saw the coal on the side. I laid the road straight with it. I did not know whether there was a blown-out shot or not.

383. Was there much slack in the bord where you were laying the line?—No, very little.

384. Or dust?—Very little, mostly odd bottom.

385. Were there other parts of the mine which were more dusty?—Yes, No. 2 incline.

386. Was No. 4 bord dry or wet?—Pretty dry.

387. Was there any moisture about it at all?—A little. If the tools were left in for a little while—say a couple of days—they would be mouldy when you went back again.

388. So that there was a certain amount of dampness?—Yes.

389. Do you think if a man were going to fire that shot-hole on the morning of the 26th, he would have brought his tools with him?—If he had wished to fire it he would do so, but I do not think any one would want to fire that shot.

390. Why?—Because, it is in the solid.

391. *The Chairman*.] Why would any one bore it?—I should imagine it is the remains of a hole since the time the bord was driven.

392. *Mr. Joyce*.] And if this shot was put in, it was not put in the proper position?—Not to fire it.

393. And it has been stopped by the deputy?—Yes ; the shot would have been fired at the time the hole was driven ; and after the shot was fired the deputy stopped the workman, and made him go narrower, the bord being too wide.

394. Therefore, the reason was that he was going too wide there, with a danger of striking the roof?—No ; but of the bord getting too wide for ventilation. The bord was only supposed to be taken about 18ft. wide, and it was getting too wide for the length.

395. Then, your opinion, as a miner, is that the hole was bored at the time the bord was being made?—Yes.

396. How far down were you?—Only to the mid-level. I was at work there that night.

397. Was the ventilation good?—Yes.

398. Did you leave any one in the mine when you came out at 6 o'clock?—There was no one in then. Some went in afterwards. Two men went in baling water after that.

399. Did everything seem to be right when you came away?—As far as we could see, everything was all right when we came away.

400. Was the ventilation all right in the mine?—Yes.

401. At times did you see it bad?—Occasionally.

402. When did you see it bad?—Odd days.

403. On those odd days would it be gas that was making?—A little gas, but it would be cleared away with the battrice.

404. Was there always battring done up to the face?—Wherever necessary. There was a pretty fair current of air round the working-faces. I have not made an examination of the mine since. I have been down it, but have made no examination.

405. Did you notice the various forces?—No ; I took no notice of the force or the direction it came, excepting in odd places.

406. Have you formed any theory as to the cause of the explosion?—I have had no experience of gas or coal-dust, and therefore cannot say anything on either subject. I have seen gas in the lamp but have never seen any fire when we were examining for gas.

407. Have you seen them doing anything with the coal-dust?—The coal-dust, if it was left on the track, would be scraped off to the side. I have seen it covering the rails, when it would be thrown to the side, or wherever we could find room for it.

408. Was there much accumulation in any place?—Not very large.

409. What was the depth of it in No. 2 incline?—I could not say. There is rough coal and stone amongst it.

410. Did you ever go through the air-return?—I have been through it once only.