

589. Did you get burnt?—Very slightly.

590. Was that the only gas you have seen since you have been bailing?—Yes; we got the safeties when we had the flare up.

591. Do you know where the present door is?—Yes, just below the mid-level.

592. Do you know that in the next slit behind that there is a wooden stopping?—Yes.

593. Does not that wooden stopping and the present canvas door afford very much better ventilation than you had with the previous canvas door?—There was a partition then in that slit. The air went up the high side of the cabin, and down the right-hand side of the opposite workings.

594. Was there anything to prevent it going through the hole and nearly all down these workings [indicated]?—No.

595. Does the air not go up the nearest course?—It could do so; it has always been like that.

595A. And the nearest course would be the return-airway?—The ventilation has been always pretty good.

596. *Mr. Proud.*] You cannot say where the air was going in the bottom places?—The air was going away along the level when we were baling.

597. You saw nothing unusual that night?—No.

598. *Mr. Beare.*] Did you see Morris entering the workings that night and going his rounds?—I saw him in the morning, but not to speak to. He came in about 5.30 o'clock, which was his usual time.

599. *Sir J. Hector.*] Where did you actually pass him?—I saw him but a short distance away. He went through the slit above us, to the westward, to inspect that first. He went around both sides of the pit before the men went in.

600. He was found in the east side, so that he must have gone right round the mine?—Yes.

JAMES THOMPSON examined.

601. *Mr. Park.*] You are engine-wright for the Brunner Mine?—Yes.

602. Did you inspect the engines and machines on the Brunner Mine on the 26th of March?—Yes, a few minutes before 8 o'clock in the morning. It was then in its usual working order.

603. *Mr. Guinness.*] Who was driving?—Pender at that time. Bainbridge had been on until 6 o'clock in the morning on the night-shift. Pender relieved him then, or ought to have done, and he was in charge when I made the inspection.

604. Did you see or hear any explosion that morning?—I never heard anything of it.

605. Did you see any smoke coming out of the mine?—After I went on I saw a little coming out of the return, and after I saw that I was told that something had happened.

606. Were the fans kept going?—Yes; the fan was put a little quicker when we knew the accident had occurred. Up to that time we were going our usual rate.

607. *Sir James Hector.*] Did you notice the time you first noticed smoke coming out of the return?—I took it to be about 9.30. I go by the school-bell.

608. How long after you saw the smoke?—A very few minutes after I got to the mouth of the mine I saw the smoke coming out of the return.

609. Did you observe how long the smoke took to come out?—No; I was attending to other things and seeing the fan was kept going as fast as possible. I could not tell exactly.

610. What was the smoke like that came out?—A brownish colour.

611. *Mr. Joyce.*] Did you ever order the fan to be slowed down at night?—No.

612. *Mr. Proud.*] You observed nothing unusual about the fan that morning?—Nothing at all.

HENRY BAINBRIDGE examined.

613. *Mr. Guinness.*] You are an engine-driver employed by the Greymouth and Point Elizabeth Coal Company?—Yes.

614. You were in charge of the engines of the Brunner Mine on the night of the 25th of March and the morning of the 26th?—Yes; I was in charge of the fan; that was the only engine that was going. I went on at 10 o'clock at night, and continued in charge until 6 o'clock of the morning of the 26th of March, when John Pender relieved me.

616. Did you keep the fan going all the night?—Yes; it was going all night at a regular speed.

617. Did you observe anything unusual?—No.

618. You were not there when the explosion was reported?—No.

619. *Mr. Joyce.*] Did you ever slow down the fan at night?—No.

JAMES BISHOP re-examined.

620. *Mr. Joyce.*] I want to know, Mr. Bishop, how you split the air in the Brunner Mine, and how the mine was ventilated?—The air is split above the middle level, and a portion is taken into the west workings, and the remaining portion is taken towards the east. [Witness indicated on the plan particulars as to the air-course, as shown by the arrows on the plan.]

621. *Mr. Beare.*] You heard the evidence given by Mr. Rooney as to his having worked in 5ft. of gas. What have you to say to that?—That statement is inexplicable to me. I do not think any man could have worked in 5ft. of gas. I really cannot understand a man making such a statement.

622. What evidence is there as to there ever having been 7ft. of gas in the mine, as stated by Edward Moore?—About the middle of December there was a breakdown of the electric pumping-gear, and the ventilation of the bords referred to by Moore was allowed to flag, and the air-current worked uncertainly. He was taken off by the fireman to bring out his tools, as his bord was not likely to be worked again. There is no coal there 12ft. high. I do not say there was not a hole in the floor, making up that height from the roof, but there was not 12ft. of coal there.

The Commission adjourned at 3.30 p.m.