

1217. Was there soot and coke on the side of the prop next to the blown-out hole?—I cannot remember that. Some props had coke, I think, hanging on to them.

1218. Did you see any dropping of coke from the roof?—In some parts the roof was greatly coked.

1219. Did you notice the tramway?—Yes.

1220. Was it quite clean?—There was coal lying upon it; it was almost buried.

1221. Was it coal that had fallen since the burning?—Yes, I think some coal had fallen since the fire; but I did not observe it closely.

1222. *Mr. Proud.*] Do you consider the coal-dust in the Brunner Mine very inflammable?—Yes.

1223. Was No. 4 bord the seat of the explosion?—I have no doubt about it.

1224. And it was carried on from place to place by coal-dust?—When it picked up the coal-dust the explosion was intensified and carried on. The first day I went down the mine there was a tremendous lot of coal-dust lying about.

1225. *Mr. Skellon.*] You said there is no doubt the shot had blown out recently on account of the coking round the hole. Does a blown-out shot coke round the hole?—It is not exactly the hole, but all the place, that it coked, including the roof.

1226. You gave as your opinion that the shot had blown out recently on account of finding coke round the hole, is that correct?—That was the place where the greatest heat appeared to be in the mine.

1227. But a blown-out shot would not coke, would it?—A blown-out shot would cause an explosion, and that explosion of coal-dust would naturally coke all the coal round about it.

1228. If there was no explosion, would a blown-out shot coke all round the hole?—No.

1229. What was the depth of the slack coal found in the floor of the bord?—I could not tell you, but I do not think there was a great deal; no more than you would generally find in a bord of any bituminous mine, where the coal is very liable to crumble.

1230. When a bord is worked out, do you not think if the dust was cleaned out before lifting the road that there would be less danger of coal-dust explosions?—There would be less danger.

1231. *Mr. Guinness.*] You said in reply to Mr. Proud that you thought Brunner dust was very dry?—Inflammable.

1232. You know that in the dip-workings there is a stream of water there caused by the mine leakage?—Yes.

1233. Are you aware if it was a dry mine, a damp mine, or a wet mine?—Some of the bords are very dry, while in the dip incline the water is running down.

1234. What would you say about the bord in the neighbourhood of blown-out shot?—There was no sign of that being wet, it appeared to be a dry bord.

1235. That was practically as you saw it after the explosion?—Yes; when I saw the bord before it was not properly dry, after the explosion, neither was the incline where water was running down.

BRUNNERTON, THURSDAY, 14TH MAY, 1896.

ROBERT TENNENT examined.

1. *Mr. Park.*] What are you, Mr. Tennent?—I have been a deputy in the Brunner Mine for thirteen years, and under Mr. Bishop all the time. I have been a coal-miner fifteen or sixteen years. I have been in the mines over forty years—thirteen years in New Zealand, all the time in the Brunner Mine.

2. Do you remember the accident of the 26th March?—Yes.

3. Had you been in the mine the night before?—I came out the night before at 6 o'clock.

4. Had you been in the mine prior to that?—Yes; since the day-shift went on. I have not been strictly a deputy since the beginning of November. My work has been preparing roads.

5. What where you doing on the 25th?—We were putting up timber on the right-hand side level, going down the dip on the west side of the mine, between Nos. 6 and 7.

6. Whose bord were you in?—In no particular place on that day.

7. Did you find any gas about the mine immediately prior to the 25th, or on the 25th?—I had no authority to examine the places unless I had been told off to do it by the overman. It was not part of my duty to make an examination of the workings from the time the single shift came on. I was opposite mate to Morris.

8. What sort of a man was he?—A very faithful, able, and experienced man.

9. You have been through the whole of the mine?—I was put in charge of the dip-workings by Mr. Bishop—to take full charge of the driving in the dip.

10. You know something about stoppings?—I know everything in connection with the mine.

11. Were they suitable stoppings, or the best that could be got for this particular mine?—At the time the stoppings were built I advised that they should be of crib logging, as the moment the ground lifted the stoppings got firmer. I advised crib-logging stoppings on account of the heaving nature of the ground. The ventilation was very much improved after that class of stoppings was adopted.

12. When were they adopted?—Possibly eighteen months ago.

13. And the return airway, was that good?—I know nothing in regard to the return, because I only once travelled it during my time in the Brunner Mine. It was not my duty to travel it unless the overman asked me. Sometimes he went himself, and sometimes two of his companions went.

14. As you know the mine thoroughly, was there any place where gas could accumulate?—No; I know of no accumulation of gas in that mine.

15. Do you know the very lowest workings of it?—I know every inch of the dip.