

112. Were you able to go along the main level? Was it perfectly dry on the 24th?—Yes, they were working.

113. Were you able after the explosion to go along?—No; the first time I was there was with Mr. Bishop and Mr. Cochrane, and the water was along this face, lower end of dip sump level [indicated].

114. On the incline there was a track and a pony-truck: was that pony-truck found in the level?—They were found in the level, but I could not say where.

115. Where was the body of the pony found?—I could not tell.

116. When you went there with Messrs. Cochrane and Bishop, what depth was the water?—I did not go through. I saw Messrs. Cochrane and Bishop wading along to examine the high side of the pillar. As far as I could tell, the water was over their knees. In parts it was dry. There was one portion of the floor which had holes in it, which would account for the water coming up to their knees in that part. Past that there was a hillock, which was dry. You could not walk along there now.

117. *Mr. Joyce.*] Your opinion was that there were two flames: that they had met there in the 4th bord, and this opinion is confirmed by the current and flame you saw in the top of the roof?—That is my opinion. It shows two flames there.

118. Did you and the over-men and everybody else have any conversation with one another as to that shot having been put in previous to the explosion?—That is not true.

119. Did you ever see the blown-out shot-hole?—I know there was a part of a hole left there.

120. In your opinion is that blown-out shot the same as you saw before?—As far as I can say it is.

121. You say that you would expect to find gas in Denniston's bord and Pattinson's?—On the Friday after the explosion I was sent by Mr. Bishop to brattice Brislane's place. The only reason for my thinking of the possibility of gas accumulating there, was that on turning the air into this part I found a little gas on the top of a deep fall at the back end of No. 1 bord or No. 2 bord, between the levels. That is all the ground in work there.

122. Assuming the gas had accumulated in Denniston's and Pattinson's bords, are the marks of the explosion in the mine consistent with the theory that the gas did explode there?—Behind Denniston's place there is a severe burn on the low side of the pillar. It appeared to me as if the force had struck backwards on to this pillar.

123. In your opinion was the explosion caused by the ignition of gas in Pattinson's bord?—There is a possibility of it being kindled if gas had existed there.

124. Are the marks in No. 4 bord consistent with the marks in Pattinson's bord?—They were in a direct line with the slit where Pattinson was working.

125. Are those effects consistent with an explosion in Pattinson's bord, or with an ignition of gas?—The evidences are conflicting on this point. It is difficult to know at which point the explosion has occurred, whether at the lower or upper end.

126. But is there any doubt that it started in the upper place of Pattinson's bord?—The evidences are conflicting, and I could not possibly say, although I might think that Pattinson might be the originator of the explosion.

127. At the other end of Pattinson's bord?—No; behind Denniston's. The gas has accumulated in either of these two points.

128. In your opinion was it in either of these two places?—There is no possible place that I know of that gas could accumulate.

129. In your opinion was this explosion a gas explosion or a coal-dust explosion?—With reference to the shot-hole, I could not say that there was no shot-hole there, simply from the fact that I was not present. It is possible that a shot has occurred there, or been placed there, even though all the local conditions go against it. As far as we can gather, there were no tools or any indications of any persons or of any collier being at that place.

130. If a collier had been there, would you think his tools would have been found in the vicinity?—I would naturally expect so.

131. In the majority of cases a collier leaves his drilling machine close up to the shot-hole?—He would have left his tools in a safe place.

132. Close by the hole?—Near the hole where he was working.

133. There was some coal lying on the floor. I do not think you satisfactorily explained where that came from. Do you think it came from the mouth of the blown-out shot or from a point lower down?—I will answer that question as directly as I possibly can. There is a breaker of coal lying along here [indicated]. This coal is loose. This is caused by the age of the place. When a place stands there is generally a loose part of the coal goes along the pillar, and particularly at a point like that.

134. *Sir J. Hector.*] That is caused by the weathering of the face?—Yes; I would naturally have expected that a practical miner would have taken off all this coal in the first place before firing a shot.

135. For what reason would he do that?—To give the shot all the liberty he possibly could. The coal is loose on this side down to the ground underneath the hole, and of a shivery nature right down to the ground.

136. Therefore, the force of the explosion would knock that loose coal down?—Quite possibly it might do so. There is a point here, with reference to that hole, I wish to explain. This hole, to my practical knowledge, leading from the road, is not such a fast hole as is represented—I mean the shot-hole. I would naturally expect from the most experienced miner in the mine that when that hole was drilled, he would drill it on something of this line [indicated], because he has to gauge the coal and to work the face by the way his road is going in.

137. You do not think he would drill with the grain of the coal?—With the rise of the coal he would naturally incline the hole to gain a face.