218. If you had no clay handy, where would you get any?—No man would put in dry tamping into a shot-hole. He would damp it in some way or another. He would empty his "billy" if he could find no other way.

219. Then damp coal-dust is bad tamping?—It is prohibited by law. I have seen miners, as a rule, where they could not obtain clayey matter, take a shovel and scrape the damp matter out of the bottom of a truck. That would be principally damp slack.

220. Do you not think stations ought to be provided in which tamping ought to be kept, rather than take the coal-dust off the floor?—It might do. In a grent many instances throughout the Brunner Mine, where the bottom is cut up for the road, there is a kind of fire-clay matter, and this makes the best possible tamping.

221. Do you not think some tamping ought to be made?—It might save danger from that kind of tamping. I consider damp tamping of any kind has very little tendency to cause anything of an alarming nature.

222. You know the dams in the mine?—Yes.

223. There is a stopping, where the air goes over the place?—There is a bit of rock that has come down in the back-stopping.

224. There is an air regulator there, I think you call it?—Not at that dam [indicated]. I have measured it, and it is supposed to be 6ft. wide, as nearly as possible, and about 3ft. high. I do not say that that is a good thing. It could be better.

225. Are there two places about there for the ventilation of the mine?—That is the only return from the east side.

226. *Sir J. Hector.*] I suppose, when you talk of a damp coating formed of dust in the standing parts of the mine not in daily use, you mean that underneath that coating the dust is dry?—Quite dry underneath—the second coating. It could be stirred up by a violent shock.

227. Do you not consider the hole referred to would be too fast a hole to fire?—Supposing all this coal was taken off, and the hole was made ready, I would have considered that the shot would have caught on to the coal.

228. You mean that the hole was not in a fit state to be fired?—Not as it stands.

229. You say something about the hole having been made twelve months before?—There was a little bit of the hole made when the shoulder was "cast" on.

230. Some coal had been shaken off. Do you suspect at the time that hole was made it was fired?—It is the back end of the hole.

231. What became of the front of the hole?—The shot had been fired, and it had broken off.

232. When?—At the time the place was going.

233. Is it the coal you describe as having been shaken off this hole that was lying on the top of this tramway; it has only been there eight days, because the tramway was only laid eight days before?—If that is the hole, the back part is left. It has nothing to do with this.

234. I understand you to say that the coal which rests upon the rails is coal that was broken off this face?—The loose coal all through is, I think, "breaker" off the bord.

235. When did you see that loose coal?—When I saw this charring.

236. Are you aware whether the coal still standing on the east side [indicated] was charred or cracked?—Yes; it was charred. You could see the "break" going in behind it; that is by the age of the place and the constant crumbling nature of the coal. On account of this you naturally expect what we call a "breaker" of coal, or the "weathering" of the coal—where the coal is broken by standing or pressure.

237. If it showed that the coal on the roof and the coal on the wall and floor had been on fire at the time of the explosion, would that be consistent with this blow-out?—No. I attribute the charring to the fire that existed there. Assuming this shot has been fired, the greatest flame would have been up this way [indicated], where the shot would have struck, and, of course, the biggest amount of charring would have been in front of the shot. It exists about the same distance on either side. I would have expected had it gone back this way it would have tapered off in another direction [indicated].

238. Would you expect that the shot had fired the coal in the roof?—I would not say that the shot had not fired the roof, but there is a possibility of a shot lighting the whole thing. I would not say there was no shot there, simply because I was not present.

239. But there was extraordinary burning?—There was severe burning.

240. Now, you say that severe burning was caused by the meeting of two flames, but you had no air between the two flames to make this severe burning. If two flames met in a close passage like a tunnel do they continue to burn?—I think so.

241. Where would they get their air from?—From inside.

242. That would not be air. On which side of the fall did you see the deposit of soot?—On the inside of the fault.

243. From that would not you rather judge that the under-current of dust, flame, and smoke had travelled in the direction towards the fault?—It is that way [indicated]; there is a forward flame, and then it has come back in an in-rush, while the work of destruction has gone forward a second time.

244. Was this bord tolerably clean the time you were in it before?—Not this bord.

245. Was it very sooty?—I was not in there all the time it was standing.

246. You do not know whether there would be a sufficient quantity of coal-dust to cause such a deposit of soot as existed on the inside of the brattice?—This place was all dry. The force going up-hill would give it a tendency to make it dry.

247. Was it any person's working-place that morning of the 26th?—Not to my knowledge.

248. *Mr. Proud.*] You mentioned gas having been observed. Was the brattice kept close up to the face?—Brislane's place was bratticed as close as it could be. That was the only fast place in the mine on that side.