

42. How far was the dam from the plank-stopping?—We did not get beyond the dam.
43. Was there no inside wall?—Yes; it seemed as if a second wall had been built.
44. What was the other wall built of?—Sawn timber, about 4 in. or 5 in. square.
45. Was that well caulked?—Just the same as the rest. It seemed to be well caulked.
46. What depth of clay would there be inside those two walls?—The clay had been placed close up to the roof. One part of the dam was standing, and the whole of the clay at the other end of the dam had been washed away from top to bottom.
47. Were you satisfied that the clay was soft when it was put in?—Yes, I am satisfied of that, because the men showed us where they got the clay from.
48. *The Chairman.*] You are the Mr. Foster who inspected the place in company with Messrs. Shore and Alison?—Yes.
49. How were the men to get into the mine after the fire unless they put up a fan?—The current might be coming out one day, and going in the next. You will find from Mr. Tennent's report that he had been in the mine under those two conditions, and at the time there was not much danger until she burst into flame.
50. Would you risk going into the mine, trusting to the current not changing until you got out?—The report goes to show that Mr. Tennent did it himself.
51. But when they wanted to go in to build a dam, or put in stoppings, how were they to get in unless they drove the smoke, gas, or flame backward?—If the air was drawing right they would not want to do anything. They would not require to drive in any air at all. In my opinion, the main roadway should not have been bratticed at all. It was after the main road was bratticed that she burst into flame, and that caused the whole trouble. I think you will find that the report states that the rope was cut so many chains inside the mine—that is, cut a long way from the dam.
52. In their report of the 29th January, 1900, Messrs Tennent and Dixon say, "In connection with the underground fire in the Westport Cardiff Company's mine, we, the undersigned, have this day endeavoured to locate position of said fire, but owing to the unreliable ventilation, which is 'natural,' and the air-current thereby reversing every few minutes, we are unable to reach the affected part without incurring undue risk. We have therefore decided that no further risk to human life be incurred, and that a reliable current of air must be established to obviate this. To insure this current we decided the fan shall be removed from its present position, and temporarily set at opening to Chasm Creek from first section of the mine. Further, in the meantime all openings to-day are to be sealed off by close bratticing, and no workmen are to enter the section of the mine until authorised by the person in full control of operations." You say in regard to that, "We cannot but express our surprise at the method adopted of sealing off the mine by brattice-cloth stoppings, and must state that, if at this point had temporary stoppings of boards lined with clay been used, we consider the seat of fire could easily have been located in a day or two, besides preventing spread of fire beyond Hector block, thus preserving haulage-road and workings from mine-entrance to that block. The utilisation of a fan to create a strong draught through a mine on fire was contrary to the recognised custom of dealing with fires." That is what I desire you to explain. How were men to get in unless they established this current of air that Messrs. Tennent and Dixon speak of?—They have been in. With this natural means of ventilation it all depends upon the current of air. If going in in one direction they could go in, but if it was going in in another direction they could not go in.
53. Supposing the current of air changed while they were in, would they not be caught?—I do not think the change would come so quickly as all that. If that fire had been left dormant it was only a matter of time for the current of air to change and enable them to get in.
54. *Mr. Lomas.*] As a practical miner, how long do you think it would take with two men to put in a temporary stopping?—Say, four hours; but on a pinch I think it might be done in less time than that.
55. Supposing there had been an accumulation of gas, would the danger have been increased by the putting-on of this fan and drawing the air over the fire?—I think it would. From the report we got there was an explosion.
56. What method would you have adopted, in order to get into this mine, to carry the air with you and not draw it over the fire?—I should have adopted the same method as they did—with a very light current of air, just sufficient to keep the men alive.
57. Supposing from the mouth the whole mine was full of smoke, and you wanted to get a chain?—I should have forced the air in front of me.
58. Would not that have forced the air into a flame?—I do not think so.
59. You know of no other method except by blowing in the air?—No. I should have put in a brattice, and have had a return.
60. Then the air would not have gone on to the fire at all?—That is the plan I should have adopted had I been there. I should have forced the air in and had had a return.
61. From your experience as a miner, is that the method generally adopted—after an explosion, say?—Yes. It seems to me, as a miner, to be the only practical way.

TIMOTHY CORBY attended and made a statement.

*Mr. Corby:* I am one of five gentlemen who were appointed by the residents of this district to represent the district in matters connected with the Cardiff fire. My colleagues are Messrs. James Quinn, James Hunter, Charles Stewart, and John Milligan. The first matter we wish to touch upon is the aspersions cast upon the district by the report of Mr. Hayes, Inspecting Engineer to the Government, when before the Goldfields and Mines Committee of the House of Representatives. He insinuated when before that Committee that we wanted this inquiry made because there was some antagonistic feeling existing towards Mr. Tennent. I wish to say that I have no antagonistic feeling towards Mr. Tennent myself, and that if I thought any of my