

146. And I take it that you express no opinion in regard to the examination of working-places in the mine?—I have expressed no opinion.

147. I take it that you have no doubt that the coaldust which you examined as to its explosibility was coaldust from the Taupiri Mine?—It was sent to the office of the Dominion Analyst by the Minister of Mines. That was the specimen we tested. The other small specimens I spoke about I took away myself, merely as specimens. I have the specimen here which I tested, if any one wishes to examine it.

148. And I think we may take it that the mere fact that there was a very large quantity of gas then in the mine, some days after the explosion, affords no guide as to the amount of gas that was present at the time of the explosion?—No measure of it.

149. That would be particularly so where the ventilation had been interfered with by the explosion?—That is the reason of my answer.

150. I think, in addition to the violent and sudden explosion you have spoken of, in order to propagate an explosion there must be flame?—There must be flame.

151. So that the mere kicking up of dust by horses' hoofs would not be sufficient to create an explosion—there must be a concussion and an intense flame. The main evidence of the explosion is to be seen in the main haulage-way, is it not?—So far as I have examined.

152. And the greatest force seems to have travelled through the main haulage-way?—I think so.

153. *Mr. Napier.*] Supposing that gas existed near the roof, is there not a constant tendency for it to become diffused?—Yes.

154. And assuming that the current of air was efficient the gas would not remain?—No. It would gradually come down, be diffused into the air, and be carried away, if there was no fresh supply.

155. And even if there was a continual small exudation of gas, provided the air was continuous also there would be a constant diffusion of the gas?—The firedamp will diffuse into the air. It flows on the top, but it gradually comes down, and if there is a current it gets swept away; but that takes some time.

156. The method of cleansing or freeing the cavity from gas is, I presume, by the introduction of fresh air?—Yes.

157. Now, Wear has told us during the inquest proceedings, and it is suggested that he will state here, that they were constantly able to detect gas or foulness in the adjacent area: they had some premonition that gas would be there. What do you say to that?—Some people can sniff firedamp.

158. He has had some experience as an examiner, and would be likely to be able to detect it with perhaps a greater keenness than others?—I am not sure—I think I can detect it myself. I know other people who cannot, and then again some people are better than I am at it.

159. Is it customary, from your experience of mines at Home, for gas to be always reported by the deputies in England?—Yes, I believe so.

160. You have heard the evidence which was given at the inquest with regard to the reporting of gas?—Yes.

161. In the books which were produced by the Inspector it was reported. Did you understand that gas to mean gas even when it was below the explosive standard, and that it is always reported whether 2 per cent., or 3, or more?—So long as it can be detected gas should be reported. I understand that is done.

162. *Mr. Wilford* put a question to you as to whether the test could be efficient without the use of a ladder. Is a ladder at all necessary if a man can reach the place where the gas is likely to be?—If he is certain where it is and can reach it a ladder would not be necessary.

163. Then the question of a ladder or no ladder really only becomes relevant if the place where the gas is supposed to be, or is likely to be, is out of his reach?—Clearly.

164. What is the height of the passage-ways which you examined yourself?—I am afraid I cannot answer that correctly—they vary so much.

165. Say 7 ft. then?—Many were higher and many lower.

166. The place where your lamp went out was at the fall?—Yes, the fall in No. 5.

167. And do I understand you to say that you went up 5 ft. on the debris which had fallen from the roof?—About 5 ft., yes.

168. Now, assuming there were falls, could not an efficient test be made by a man without a ladder by ascending the debris from the fall, provided he could reach sufficiently close to the roof of the cavity?—At that place, yes.

169. With regard to this alleged interview, have you ever seen a *New Zealand Herald* containing a report which purported to be an interview with yourself on this matter?—I am sorry, but I cannot say—I have been interviewed here so often, but I have no recollection of seeing it.

170. *Mr. Bennie.*] You said, I think, that your report to the Minister was written in answer to certain specific questions; that you had visited the mine before writing the report, but when writing the report you were not aware that large quantities of gas had been found in the mine. Do you mean that since then you have become aware of the discovery of gas in the mine?—Yes. When I wrote my report I was not aware of gas being found in large quantities in the mine.

171. You had no knowledge then that there had been a large quantity found?—No, I had no knowledge.

172. Your knowledge that large quantities of gas had been found in the mine was obtained since the explosion?—Certainly since and not before the explosion.

173. That is the meaning of your reference to it in your remarks?—Yes.