

117. And how long to get the harness on?—Not very long.

118. *Mr. Napier.*] You said that on the previous occasion the deputy told you to go along—that it was all safe. Was that the custom in the mine?—Yes.

119. Was that custom observed on the previous occasion—a fortnight before: you said he rang up and got the answer “All safe”?—He said, “All safe.”

120. You are speaking of what happened a fortnight before the 12th?—Yes.

121. And that was the custom?—Yes.

122. You would not go to work on any morning unless you got that word?—No.

123. Now, coming to the morning of the accident, have you any doubt that a similar word was given to you by the deputy before you started?—No.

124. You have no doubt?—No.

125. *Mr. Dowgray.*] I am not at all clear in regard to this matter. Pay-Saturday is a different day from a working-day?—Yes.

126. What was the usual custom in this particular mine? What term does the deputy use on such mornings?—He told me I had to go to No. 5 through the dip to draw the rails there into No. 5.

127. On that particular morning did he use the term that it was “All safe”?—He said it was “all right,” and that I was to go to No. 6 cabin, and that the others would be told where they had to go. He would send me through into the dip with my horse that morning.

128. He told you to go to No. 6 cabin?—He told every one to go to No. 6, but I had to go to the stables and get my horse.

129. Where were these other men going?—I cannot say—some to different parts. And the word “All right” was meant in a general sense.

130. Did he say, “You can go down the little dip—she is all right there”?—No.

131. He said, “You can go, boys, she is all right”?—Yes.

132. *The Chairman.*] What do you suppose he meant by the words “all right”: what does that convey to your mind?—That the mine was safe and that we could go on with our work.

133. *Mr. Dowgray.*] What impression had you when you met the deputy on the previous occasion?—I never thought anything.

134. Did you not think he should be there with the safety-lamp?—No.

135. Did the other fellows come after he left you? When did the other men join you on the previous pay-Saturday—were they long after the deputy?—No.

#### JOSEPH YOUNG sworn and examined. (No. 8.)

*Witness read and put in his evidence given at inquest, as follows:—*

“JOSEPH YOUNG, sworn, saith: I am a miner employed at the Huntly Mine. Up to about a fortnight before the 12th September I was employed with Mr. Wear inspecting the old workings. I had been employed at this for about two years. The results of the inspections would be reported in the book every day. I wrote the reports, and Mr. Wear signed them. I have also signed the reports. On the 23rd March, 1914, we found a large accumulation of gas in No. 7 working. Gas was also found on a second occasion on the 14th April. We found gas in 5, 6, 7, and 8 bords in No. 7 south, occurring at intervals of three weeks, and came to the conclusion there was something wrong with the fan. The reports do not state the extent of gas. I cannot say that steps were not taken to remedy the presence of gas when it was reported. We could not visit that place for another week. We have found gas in No. 5 south, little winch level in the little dip section, No. 7 north, and No. 7 south. In my opinion, the gas found in these places was in dangerous quantities. Gas was found in the winch level in the little dip section on 29th April. I think this is the last occasion gas was found in that level; the level was inspected every week. There is a good bit of dust in that level. I would not consider it the dustiest part of the mine. There were four fairly big falls there. I did not see any indication of spontaneous combustion having taken place there, nowhere in that section. I do not think we tested for spontaneous combustion, as we did not think it necessary. I have had twenty-five years' experience of mining. If we found a small quantity of gas—under 2 per cent.—I would not consider it dangerous. We would make a test at every face, or where there had been a fall. We would average one fall a month. This is a rough estimate and probably excessive.

“By Mr. Tunks: The four falls were composed of fireclay and coal. These are the falls we expect to liberate gas. This material could generate spontaneous combustion. It is only a rough guess to say there is a fall every month—that is counting the big and the little. Every fall would be reported in the book.

“By Mr. Dixon: I have known men go into the old workings instead of the lavatory with naked lights. I consider it dangerous. I reported it verbally. In some parts they would only have to step through the fence. The miners would know they should not go there. A copy of the Coal-mines Act and regulations is posted up at the pit-head.

“By Mr. Napier: I vouch for the accuracy of these reports. All falls ought to be reported. If they are not in the book they ought to have been. The falls that I mentioned were all reported. There were no falls recorded in the month of August. When I vouch for the accuracy of the reports I only vouch for the reports in my handwriting. I believe the other portion is equally accurate. When we visited a place where gas was reported a week later we sometimes found gas there, but in different quantities. It was our duty to report the discovery of gas in any quantity. Anything over 2 per cent. I should report. The book does not distinguish between dangerous quantities of gas and otherwise. Every quantity of gas I should consider dangerous. I do not agree with Mr. Wear's opinion that gas was only dangerous on one occasion, or on two occasions at the outside. Any gas I discovered in the mine I would report irrespective of quantity. You could not tell from the book whether the gas men-