

By Court: The brick stopping was sound on the evening before the accident. No gas could get through. Gas could get through the door in No. 5. It was a fairly good door.

*Thomas Edward Webb*, sworn, saith: I am a deputy in Ralph's Mine. I remember the 27th August, when Mr. McGill told me about some heating in the little dip. He told me he visited it and when he left it it was in perfect order. I relieved him at 12 midnight. He told me to go and look at it again. I did so. When I left at 8 a.m. it was perfectly cool. I wrote a letter to the acting-manager reporting it [Exhibit P]. I have been there once since the 27th August. It was on the Monday following. There was no heating then. I have known heating in No. 7 south. It was immediately attended to. I cannot fix any date. It was within the last six months. I left the mine at 6 a.m. on the morning of the explosion. The only portion I visited that night was the stone drive in No. 6. I went down as far as No. 7 pump that night. I did not notice anything unusual in the mine that night. The last time I was at the No. 7 pump would be before 4 a.m. I have had thirty years' experience in mines. I have been everything from a door-boy to under-manager. I have worked and visited many mines, but only remember one that was as safe as this one. It was Allen's Colliery, in Wigan. It was worked with naked lights. I have never considered naked lights to be dangerous in this mine. It has never struck me that safety-lamps should be used in this mine. I have noticed gas in this mine in the old workings. During the whole of the time I have been working in the mine I have never found the slightest trace of gas in the working-faces.

By Mr. Dixon: I have been a deputy a month this last occasion. I have an under-manager's certificate.

*Edward Patrick Kennedy*, sworn, saith: I am a trucker in Ralph's Mine. I remember the 9th July last, when an accident happened to William Kelly, now deceased. I was working mate with him in the stone drive. We had been working about an hour and a half when Kelly walked back about 10 or 12 yards from the face to get a drink of water. A few minutes after he went I heard what sounded like a dull explosion. There was a rush of air which knocked me down on my hands and knees and put the light out. I jumped up again, and I heard Kelly calling out, "I am burnt; come here Ned." I went to him as quickly as I could in the dark. His lamp was on his cap; it was out. His cap was on his head. In taking a drink he would be standing up to his full height. I eventually brought him out of the mine. He told me he had been taking a drink out of his billy when the explosion occurred. Kelly was about 6 ft. high. He would be within a foot of the roof when he stood. The place would be about 7 ft. high. There was no pot-hole where the explosion occurred. The roof was nearly level, with time lathes along timber supports. We had lit gas about 30 or 40 yards away from the spot before: it was in the face where we were working. The gas just lit with a puff. It would be a month before the time Kelly was burnt. The deputies told us to be cautious about gas in that drive. That was the greatest quantity of gas I have seen in the mine. I have been working the mine for over four years. Kelly reported the first occasion to Darby. I was only working for Kelly.

By Mr. Tunks: We had holed through the day before Kelly had the accident. This would increase the ventilation a good deal. We did not find it cold there after we had holed through. I did not speak to Darby about the quantity of air coming through after we had holed through. I cannot explain how the pipe at the intake end was blocked up with a brattice-cloth: we noticed it was blocked when we got there that morning, about 8.30 a.m. There were two shifts working in that drive; the other shift followed us.

By Mr. Bennie: I heard afterwards that the explosion (Kelly's) put the lights out on No. 6 flat. I do not know if it raised any dust.

*Stuart Dixon*, sworn, saith: I am a miner, employed at Ralph's Mine. I am also president of the Taupiri Coal-mines Employees' Industrial Union of Workers. I have been mining for between seven and eight years, quartz and coal. I am also check inspector with Mr. Turton for the union. I had full power to visit all workings and see that everything was in order. I produce report made by me [Exhibit E]. I found that the ventilation in one place was bad owing to insufficient air coming in, and in another section of the mine the air was not being circulated. Taking the whole of the mine, there was plenty of air. I reported the matter, and the following day it received attention. Shortly afterwards Mr. Fletcher asked me to go through the old workings to satisfy ourselves. I told Mr. Fletcher we could not do so without consent of the union. I have only received a complaint as to insufficiency of air—that the air was not sufficient to carry away the dust. Mr. Turton and I visited this portion of the mine complained of. We took a reading, and there was no current of air. We complained to the manager. The following day the manager told us he had discovered the defect—the brattice had been pulled down. The man who complained told me the same night he had plenty of air. I have been down the mine since the explosion. I have always considered the mine perfectly safe to work with naked lights. It would be my duty, if I discovered anything dangerous, to complain to the manager.

By Mr. Bennie: I did not notice dust in dangerous quantities on the travelling-roads where we walked. I noticed dust alongside the ribs. I have noticed dust, but not on the travelling-roads. I did not know the dust was dangerous except as to health until I read Professor Dixon's report in the *Star* just previous to the explosion.

By Mr. Tunks: I know that check inspectors had referred to dust in their report three months previous to my appointment as check inspector. I think they were made in reference to discomfort in travelling. Mr. Turton said to me when making our inspection, "The complaint in our last report has made a terrible difference: they are watering the roads."

By jury: No special qualification is needed to be appointed check inspector. I have no qualifications except my experience and study. I have attended the School of Mines.