

105. Whom is that signed by?—H. J. H. Blow, per H.E.R.—that is Mr. Ratcliffe, Chief Clerk.

106. No prosecution took place?—That is so.

107. In that letter which you wrote to the Under-Secretary dated the 7th August, 1914, you referred to the fact that you could not get information from the men, did you not?—Yes, that is so. I said, "I as Inspector of Mines receive no help from the Miners' Union or their check inspectors, who are as at present constituted the creation of the mining company's directors."

108. I happened to notice that in that letter, but I want to ask you this: did not you tell the Coroner that you did not find the men reticent in making complaints?—That is so.

109. How do you reconcile the two statements?—They had made no complaints.

110. Did you tell the Coroner that you did not find the men reticent or that you did find the men reticent in making complaints?—I am reported to have said, "During the last two years I have had no complaints from any one employed in the mine for the last two years, either as to gas or anything else wrong in the mine. I have not found gas in the working-places or travelling-roads in such quantities as would in my opinion render the use of safety-lamps compulsory."

111. Now, in your letter to Mr. Fletcher, dated the 30th May, 1914, in regard to spraying, you said that there was a great amount of dust on the travelling-roads, and you requested that same be remedied by spraying. I want you to define as clearly as you can what you meant by "a great amount of coaldust"?—Some places it might have been 2 in. deep with coaldust. It was not the very finest of coaldust. The term "coaldust" as I used it was the ordinary expression of the miner and of myself, not the dust which Professor Dixon has declared to be so explosive. The coarse dust would probably not explode. But this dust to which I referred will rise when the men are walking along, and will be a serious source of inconvenience.

112. So that the men would get it all over them when they walked along the road?—Yes, and they would breathe it also.

113. Would you be prepared to say that any part of it is not explosive?—Professor Dixon gives it as his opinion that only the small dust would explode—that portion which would hang on the walls.

114. Are you differentiating it purely as that which will and that which will not hang on the walls—that the dust which is fine enough to hang on the walls will explode, while that which is too coarse to do so will not explode?—From what I have read of coaldust-explosions, and from his opinion, that is the conclusion I have arrived at.

115. In your letter to the manager dated the 30th May, 1914, you say, "From one of the coal-cutting machines in the Taupiri West Section I noticed a youth clearing away coaldust. The air was also laden with dust, and as in my opinion it is unreasonable to ask persons to work under such conditions I have to request that a jet of water be used for the purpose of laying the dust which accumulates." Had that any reference to the possibility of an explosion?—No, the dust appeared to be a source of inconvenience to the boy. That is what I had in view. I had no thought of an explosion.

116. You also said that a greater quantity of air was necessary?—That is so.

117. Was it remedied?—Yes.

118. When did you go down to that section of the mine after the date of your letter—the 30th May?—The 21st August. This is a quotation from my diary dealing with the matter, and was written the day after I made the inspection: "22nd August, 1914. With the manager and underviewer I have this morning continued my tour of inspection. Taupiri West section: We inspected all the working-places and the haulage and other roads leading thereto, and found them in good order; ventilation good."

119. On the 30th May you wrote to Mr. Fletcher on the subject, and on the 21st August you found it had been remedied?—Yes, that is correct.

120. Now, you say in your statement to Mr. Miller that gas was reported in Kelly's place on the 1st July?—Yes, that was reported in the officials' mine report-book.

121. And on the 2nd July you found gas?—Yes; my report is as follows: "2nd July, 1914. With the underviewer, Mr. W. Gowans, first-class certificated mine-manager, I have this day, between the hours of 9 a.m. and 1.30 p.m., examined several sections of the mine, old workings, where it was reported CH_4 gas had been found, and we found as follows: No. 7 level, south side, main haulage-road, and in the third bord, old workings, we found gas in roof over a fall of coal and rock. The gas was very strong; the area filled would be 60 cubic feet. The place is not in a travelling-road, and is fenced off."

122. Then gas was found on the 2nd July also?—Yes. My report also states, "On the said date I also visited No. 7, north side of the main haulage-road in the old workings. Behind the pump along the horse-haulage road leading to Bond's dip, and about 6 chains distant from that road, I found CH_4 gas in a fall over the back of the drive. The area of the fall would be 144 square feet filled with gas to a height of about 4 ft., equalling 576 cubic feet of gas."

123. I will come back to my original statement that gas was found in the mine on the 1st, 2nd, 9th, and 14th July: the 9th July is in connection with Kelly's case?—Yes, I agree as to the 2nd and the 9th, though I was not there on the latter date.

124. In your letter to Mr. Miller you say it was the 1st July?—Yes.

125. *Mr. Dowgray.*] Are we to understand that the gas you found was in addition to what was found by the deputy?—It is in the same place.

126. *Mr. Wilford.*] Can you identify the 21st August as the date when gas was discovered?—Yes. My report for that date is as follows: "21st August, 1914. I entered the mine with the manager at 9.15 a.m. and examined the following places and found as follows: (a) Stone