

456. In your letter to the Under-Secretary dated the 7th August you said that even if the prosecution against the company were not successful it would have the moral effect of producing stricter supervision?—Yes, that it would produce more effective supervision.

457. If everything was all right before, why the uneasiness or anxiety for stricter supervision?—I think I explained that before. In No. 6, where the coal-cutting machines were, there were some brattice-cloths hanging across the road for the distribution of the air into the individual places. These were torn, and a great deal of leakage was taking place. There was smoke hanging in some of the places. On measuring the air-returns from that section I found there was something like 800 cubic feet per man returning, and I desired to draw the manager's attention to the fact that stricter supervision was necessary.

458. Did you not also tell us that one of the reasons was that you thought another under-viewer should be employed to examine the mine?—I did not know that I had said it to you, but I had held that opinion, because that mine is as much as I can walk through from 9 o'clock to 4 o'clock, and it is more than one underviewer can pass through and examine every place, as he is expected to do, and generally supervise the underground workings.

459. What did you mean to convey to this Commission when in reply to Mr. Macassey you said that you had a brother-in-law who was assistant manager in this mine: did you wish to convey the impression that he was an addition to the staff?—He was regarded as a reserve official, and whenever the manager was in want of an underviewer he was made underviewer in Ralph's Mine so as to comply with the law.

460. You did not mean to say that he was an addition to the staff already provided?—No. I know from my own knowledge that he knew the mine thoroughly.

461. In connection with Willcox's case, you knew that he was burned by gas in the Extended Mine?—Willcox and Conn were both burned in the Extended Mine.

462. Only one certificate had "burned by gas" on it?—No, Willcox's and Kelly's both had that.

463. You stated that it was quite possible for the gas in No. 5 bord to have come from an inrush: did you mean that that inrush could have taken place between the time of the deputy's examination and the hour of the men entering in there?—No, I did not make any reference as to whether there had been any examination or not.

464. Do you think it is possible for an inrush to have taken place between the examination of the deputy and the men travelling to work?—It would be possible, but very improbable. I would like to call the Commission's attention to one or two circumstances. On the plan there is a fault line running on the lowest side of No. 5 section. The bords from No. 6 and 7 were driven up to the fault and stopped there. That accounts in all probability for the reason why those bords were not connected. The line of resistance to the fault, which you know is a conveyor of gas, was only a short distance. If both falls took place in No. 5 bord, which appears probable, it may just have given the connection to this line of fault, and therefore have allowed the gas to come in suddenly into No. 5 and 6 bords.

465. That line would be shown in the Little dip also?—Not necessarily.

466. In regard to this plan which Mr. Reed has marked in green ink: in reply to a question by Mr. Napier you stated that the door leading to No. 6 bord would not be quite tight, and the ventilation from that door would be sufficient to ventilate this section?—I did not say that it would be sufficient to adequately ventilate that bord though.

467. Would not any leakage from that bord go straight out of No. 6 bord and enter the return, instead of going into 4 and 5: the return airway is immediately at the bottom of No. 6—you said the height was 10 ft.?—There is 140 square feet there, with 10 ft. velocity that would give 1,400 cubic feet of air passing per minute.

468. There is no fall in No. 6?—No.

469. There is a fall in No. 5?—Yes.

470. Any leakage from that bord would go down into the return airway, and not into bords Nos. 4 and 5?—It would be a kind of diffusion. It certainly would find its way straight down the bord, but there would be no perceptible velocity, and it would be in the form of diffusion. It would mix slowly with the gas.

471. Do you mean to suggest that the amount of air sealing through that door would be sufficient to diffuse the gas accumulated in Nos. 4 and 5 bords?—No, under normal conditions the leakage through that door would not adequately ventilate those places, but there would be a diffusion of sufficient air into the still air to keep the places safe provided there was no inrush of gas.

472. To keep Nos. 4 and 5 bords clear?—There is nothing before the Commission to show that any gas was coming from 3 and 4. The evidence has gone to show that the fall was at No. 5 bord, and that in all probability the gas exuded from over that fall.

473. Any leakage from that door should go straight down No. 6 bord?—Yes, but it would not sufficiently ventilate that section.

474. *The Chairman.*] To adequately ventilate that section would require stoppings or brick, or wood, or canvas?—Yes.

475. *Mr. Napier.*] Even though the whole of those bords might not be adequately ventilated, would not the ingress of sufficient air tend to constant diffusion in those bords by the leakage from the door so as to render practically harmless the mixture inside?—That depends upon the quantity of gas given off and the quantity of air coming through. A little leakage would have kept the place sweet if there had been no gas coming in.