

145. It was a special visit to the old falls?—Yes.
146. I think these old workings constitute the return airway, do they not?—Yes.
147. *The Chairman.*] You say you have tested constantly for gas with a Davey lamp. What percentage of gas is required to produce the first indication of gas on a safety-lamp?—From 2 to 2½ per cent.
148. What are your specific duties in regard to the inspection of these old workings?—Looking to see if they were heating.
149. You say you tested for gas: did you test for gas only when you saw a fall, or did you make a practice to do so?—We made a practice of it when the air was bad.
150. Did you make a systematic test?—We tested properly.
151. Every time you went through those old workings did you test for gas as well as to see if there was any heating?—Yes.
152. You did not make any test above 7 ft.?—Only on top of a fall.
153. Did you make any tests otherwise?—No, only where there was a fall we tested on the top of it.
154. When were you last through those old workings?—On the 9th September.
155. And the accident happened on the 12th?—Yes.
156. Did you make any report to the manager or anybody else of your inspection these times?—Just in the report-book.
157. *The Chairman* reads report dated the 9th September, 1914, in report-book as follows:—“Ralph’s Mine.—I, the undersigned, have examined the old workings and return airways, limbs heading, and little dip, north section, and found all safe. No sign of heating. Ventilation good.—D. WEAR.” That is your report: who wrote it?—The man who was with me.
158. There is nothing at all about gas in this report. Can you say whether you made any examination or test for gas?—Yes; that was the morning we were on top of the old fall, the 9th, just before the accident.
159. Did you make any special examination for gas?—Yes, on the 9th.
160. But there is nothing in the report in regard to gas?—We only refer to gas when it is found.
161. *Mr. Dowgray.*] What were you doing before you became an inspecting deputy?—Shot-firing.
162. Where was it customary for the men on pay-Saturdays to receive their instructions as to where they were to go to work?—At the cabin at the shaft-bottom.
163. That was on pay-Saturday morning?—On any morning.
164. You have been at work on pay-Saturday morning?—Yes, and we generally get our instructions there.
165. If you were to get your instructions there, which would be the quickest way to get to the little dip?—To go right down the road to the dip.
166. You say that you could see the gas when holding up your lamp as you showed us?—Yes.
167. Where were you working thirty years ago?—At the Wellington Pit, where the White Haven disaster took place.
168. What kind of lamps were used there thirty years ago?—The little Davey lamp.
169. Did the miners work with the Davey lamps?—Yes.
170. What age are you?—Fifty-six.
171. And you tell us that thirty years ago you were in a position to test for gas?—Yes, I knew what gas was.
172. Is it customary in Northumberland for miners to test for gas?—Where I came from the first thing a man does when he goes into his place in the morning is to examine for gas and sound the roof.
173. Does the deputy not make that examination?—Yes.
174. What age were you then?—Nearly twenty-eight.
175. There are two of you travelling the old workings?—Yes.
176. Do you both travel together?—We used to take bord and bord—one went up one bord and the other the next.
177. So that you did not travel together at all?—We did not both go up the one bord, but met at the top.
178. In that case it was only at certain points you met one another?—Yes, that is true.
179. I think you stated to Mr. Wilford that there were two or three miles of old workings?—Yes.
180. Would it take you a week to examine two or three miles?—We would travel up and down each bord.
181. Are some of these blind bords?—Yes.
182. And if gas accumulated in them how would ventilation get up there?—The gas would be shifted by means of brattice-cloth.
183. Was that done in the old workings?—Yes.
184. How often?—Whenever we got gas there.
185. Do you ever get any gas in the blind bords?—No, I cannot say that we do.
186. There was never any necessity for arranging special ventilation then?—Not in my time.
187. Then, in the blind bords about 14 ft., 15 ft., and 20 ft. high you just simply walked into them and walked out again: there were no fires?—Yes, that is so.
188. There might have been gas there, but you would not know?—No, I have never seen any of it.
189. You could not say, so far as that was concerned, that there was no gas in the blind bords?—That is right.