

places of the mine have to be examined by three competent persons—examining deputies holding deputies' certificates. Their duty was to go into the mine and examine all the working-places within two hours of the time when the body of men commence work. The mine was examined on the morning of the accident. I produce the three examining deputies' reports [Exhibit B] for the morning. They were found in the usual place in the mine after the explosion. The reports are in one book. The reports produced cover the whole of the working-places and travelling-roads in the mine. After they have inspected the mine each morning the three of them meet at cabin No. 6 and make their report. The first man down in the morning when the mine opens would be the day-shift deputy. He goes to the telephone and telephones the examining deputies at No. 6, and they tell him the mine is all right. Then the men go down to mine, to the workings. If there was anything wrong the usual routine would be to stop the men. The examining deputies examine the working-places with a safety-lamp and look for gas, see that the places in their examination are all clear of gas, see that the ventilation is in good order, and see that the haulage and travelling roads are clear of falls. This would include examining the roof. Their duty was to see that the working-places and roads were left fit for men to work in. I produce a list showing the names of those who were down the mine that morning, who were lost and who were saved. There were sixty-two men down that morning, twenty-one of whom were rescued alive, but two have since died. This makes a total of forty-three dead. There was no actual mining to be done in the mine that morning, only repairs—that is, as far as I can gather. In addition to the examining deputies there is an inspector of old workings, who has an assistant. It was a system introduced about three years ago for thoroughly examining the old workings to see that nothing unusual had taken place there from combustion, heavy falls. This is his sole work. He makes a report after every day's examination. It takes him a week to go right through the mine. I produce his report [Exhibit C]. Five days' reports would constitute a report of the whole of the old working. D. Wear was the inspector. J. Darby and W. Smith are two day-shift deputies who were lost in the disaster. Gas has been found in the old workings in small quantities. It is usually found in cavities formed by falls from the roof. I have never had any difficulty in dealing with the gas from the old workings. The gas is always of the same nature— $\text{CH}_4$ . The last report of gas is on the 17th August. "Gas diluted" means that he could not get sufficient to make a test with his safety-lamp away from the bleeder, because the ventilation is so good. In consequence of this report Mr. Bennie and I inspected this place—I think it was on the 21st August. I found the place satisfactory; there was a good current of air. As a week would elapse between the examinations of the old workings by the Inspector I would not expect any gas there unless there had been a big fall and a lot of gas suddenly let out. I consider these mines pretty free from firedamp. As the coal is of such a very hard nature I would not expect a fall, and falls are very few. On the 9th July last William Kelly, a contractor, was working in No. 6 stone drive, which is an overhead drive, to take out a big depression in the haulage-road. I produce a plan of that drive [Exhibit D]. He was working about 20 or 30 yards from a little pothole in the roof that was bleeding gas, on the fresh-air side of it. He went to the pothole to get a drink, and having a naked light on his head he ignited an accumulation of gas near the pothole. He was singed. He was off work for fourteen days, but was about the streets five days after. That particular section had been inspected before 8 o'clock on the morning of the accident and found correct. The men had been working there between 8.30 and 10.30 at the time the accident occurred. The day previous to the accident to Kelly the holing was effected between the two ends of the stone drive, and these men were engaged taking out the full opening. A good current of fresh air was going through that drive, and from the time the opening was made one of the contractors made a request to Deputy Darby to stop some of the fresh air going in as they were complaining of the cold. That request was refused by the deputy. In my opinion, the accumulation of the gas was caused by a disarrangement of the air going in there, because the intake-pipe was partly blocked by brattice-cloth. I think they found it too cold to be comfortable, and stopped some of the ventilation. That accident was reported to the Inspector of Mines, and he read my report and marked it. Besides that accident to Kelly during the four years I have been in charge of the mine I have no recollection of any other explosion in the mine. There has certainly been no explosion in the mine during the last twelve months. I have never received any complaints of gas from the deputies or under-viewers other than what was in the reports. I have had no complaints from any worker in the mine concerning gas in the mine. I have never had any reason to suspect that gas was in the mine in dangerous quantities. We have a tally-board at the surface, and one at the shaft-bottom, to show what men are working. As the men go into the cage the banksman pegs them off in numbers on the tally-board at the top, and the onsetter tallies them at the bottom. The banksman and the onsetter compare their tallies, and if they agree this is reported as the number of men who were working in the mine that day. We have no system of keeping a record of the names of the men who go down the mine. When the men come up out of the mine they are checked in the same way. In future the names of the men will be kept as safety-lamps are issued to them. Every man who goes down the mine will have a safety-lamp. The lamps will be kept on the surface. The present system will also be kept going. There are two check inspectors appointed by the union. These are S. Dixon and J. Turton. I put in a report from these inspectors [Exhibit E]. This is the only recent report [dated 27th August, 1914]. I put in a report made by the check inspectors [Exhibit F] dated 23rd May, 1914. All the matters mentioned in these reports were at once attended to. Each man is supposed to have 150 cubic feet of air per man per minute. According to these reports there were in most cases a quantity far in excess of legal requirements. The dust referred to in the report would be coaldust and stonedust. This was watered. There have been cases of incipient heating in the mine. The case was on the 26th August last. It is in my report in the old working report-book [Reports put in—Exhibit G and