

135. If all those men were going down to take out those rails should there not have been a special examination?—I think the management must have anticipated that the places were to be examined. I do not know their custom, of course, but I think it should have been done.

136. You marked two places on the plan "B" and "P" where Martin might have come into contact with gas?—Yes.

137. Could you suggest where that gas originated?—In the fall of No. 5 bord.

138. That is the result of your examination?—Yes, and I have examined many other places with the object of finding any other exudation of gas to account for the disaster, but that is the only place where I found gas exuding from the strata overlying the coal.

139. You said that this is not a dusty mine: that is, in comparison with what?—Just as we know coal-mines. There is a lot of small coal about in every working-place. This is certainly not a dry and dusty mine as compared with the mines of the Old Country, in which you find dust flying in every direction. You are wading in it up to your ankles sometimes.

140. Do they have explosions there?—Yes, they do, and very bad explosions.

141. I see it is mentioned that they did not have explosions until they had improved the ventilation and brought in more oxygen?—Some scientists say that the fine particles of coaldust are very ready to absorb oxygen, and thus become like gunpowder.

142. Supposing the oxygen were less in percentage, would it conduce to safety?—That is the most recent proposal of a Dr. Harger. He proposes that a greater proportion of carbonic acid should be introduced, and that oxygen should be reduced. Then it becomes a question as to whether humanity could live in the air with that reduced amount of oxygen.

143. Have you ever studied that aspect of the question, as to the reduction of the oxygen?—Only from technical papers. I have read of Dr. Harger's research. He has put his papers before all the technical associations in England.

144. *Mr. Brown.*] Before the world?—Yes.

145. *Mr. Dowgray.*] Following up that proposal, would you recommend that the percentage of oxygen should be reduced to 17 per cent.?—No, I do not think I would. I would not experiment upon myself that way, anyhow.

146. We have had a great deal said on the subject of working-places. A great deal hinges upon this matter. As a mining man, what is your interpretation of a man's working-place?—As we know it—you and I—the working-places of a mine are the places where coal is being obtained. In saying that I do not say that because a man is sent into an old working it should not be his working-place for the day. His working-place is the place where he works.

147. The terms "a man's working-place" and "working-faces" are two different things?—No; that is only a confusion of terms. "Working-face" and "working-place" are just the same.

148. *The Chairman.*] Has "working-place" any technical meaning? Has it a distinct meaning? What would a mining man understand by it?—From long usage it has been looked upon that where coal was being worked was a working-place, but, generally speaking, where a man may go to is his working-place for the time being. Supposing Mr. Dowgray got a cavil in a certain pit, and I met him on the way, I would say, "Have you got a good working-place?" but not "a good working-face."

149. You would certainly define it as the place where you were going to work?—Yes, it would be the place where the man was going to work that day.

150. You said that you would not consider this a dusty mine?—I do not consider it a dusty mine.

151. In view of the explosion, do you consider it a dusty mine now?—That puts it in a different position; every precaution will have to be taken now.

152. That is, since you learned of the explosive nature of the dust?—I had no knowledge of it before.

153. But since then you think the mine will have to be watched very carefully?—Yes.

154. You stated that nothing that has occurred since the explosion will have any bearing on the explosion—that is, in reference to the accumulation of dust?—Yes.

155. Would the very fact that you discovered upon your examination that that particular part of the mine held large accumulations of gas since the explosion has occurred, would that not lead you to believe that the strata of that particular part of the mine contains an enormous amount of CH_4 ?—It leads me to the conclusion that the strata does contain CH_4 . Whether an enormous amount or not, it would not require a very great exudation to accumulate a considerable quantity in fifteen days.

156. The explosion occurred on the 12th?—And it was not until the 28th that I made my examination.

157. Did you discover the gas before then?—Yes; but we could not get any air to it.

158. That large area was filled with gas before the 28th?—Yes; perhaps four or five days before.

159. I believe the old workings of this mine constitute the return airway?—The air scales through them.

160. Evidence has been led to show that the old workings were the return of the mine?—Yes.

161. If the old workings are the return airways of the mine, and evidence has been led to show that the management took extra precautions by appointing two inspectors to examine them once a week, claiming that by so doing the manager was doing something more than is required by the Act, do you think it is an extra precaution to have the return airways—that is, the old workings—examined once a week?—I think that is the rule.

162. Then they are only doing what is required of them by the law?—I do not think the whole of the return air passes through the old workings.

163. But the very fact that it was scaling into the old workings would constitute it a return?—Yes.