

Mr. BISHOP recalled.

207. *Mr. Macassey.*] Under section 58 of the Act, if the responsible Inspector of Mines considers a mine exceptionally dangerous he may move to have the men called out?—I would agree to the calling-out of the men, but I would take any steps I thought necessary afterwards.

208. Under section 58 and Special Rule 14 you think there is full power given to the Inspector to control dangerous mines?—Certainly.

JOSEPH MOUNT BROWNLIE, Horse-driver, sworn and examined. (No. 7.)

*Mr. Wilford:* I ask leave, Sir, to put in the evidence given by Mr. Brownlie at the Coroner's inquest.

Evidence read by witness, as follows:—

"JOSEPH MOUNT BROWNLIE, sworn, saith: I am a horse-driver employed in Ralph's Mine. I went down on the morning of the accident at 7 a.m. I went along to the cabin about 100 yards from the shaft. I waited for Smith, the deputy. He told me to go to the stables and get my horse. I did so. I went down the rope-walk. There were four of us at the stable. We put the harness on and went to No. 2, to the little dip. We only got through two doors and got on the turn. We had left Thompson in No. 2. We had got through the two trap-doors when we felt a gust of wind come towards us. It lifted Morton into the old workings and threw me against the trap-door. I was not knocked about at all. I did not see any flame nor hear any sound. There was a smell of something—not fresh air. We then came back to the shaft by another way, the three of us. The air was good along this way and at the foot of the shaft. It took us ten minutes to get to the shaft from where we were struck by the gust of wind. It would be about 7.20 when we met the wind. I have been working in the mine about four years. I have never heard of any complaints among the men of insufficient air or gas. It was always looked upon as safe. I took two boxes of explosives to the cutting-machine in No. 6, Wilson's gig, on the Thursday, and on Friday took two cases to the stone drive. I saw Darby: he was at the telephone at the shaft-bottom. I thought he was getting the word from No. 6 cabin.

"By Mr. Bennie: I have driven in No. 6 and No. 6 special. I have not seen much coaldust on the road from No. 6 cabin to the door—i.e., the first door. There would be a little at the side, but the track was rather slushy. I have been travelling round that way since the strike. The track was watered by Ransome. I could not say how far it was kept watered.

"JOSEPH MOUNT BROWNLIE recalled: On the day prior to the accident I got instructions from Deputy Smith to take rails from the little dip. A fortnight before I had been drawing rails from the same section. Smith gave me Alexander McGill and Mortrum to assist me, and said he would send others to assist—four others. This was on the Saturday morning. He did not mention names. I was at the shaft-bottom when I got the instructions. We were to take the rails to the trap-door leading to No. 5 section. The four others would come through the trap-door from No. 5 to meet me and help me to lift the rails. I was one of the first to go down the mine that morning. I did not see the four others. On the Friday evening previous to the accident I spoke to Allen and Baker, and they said they were going to the little dip to help to draw rails. I think Roper and Jackson were also to help. Martin worked in No. 5; he was a contract trucker. I do not know what Martin would be doing there that day unless he went to draw rails for No. 5. The bodies of Allen, Roper, Baker, and Jackson were found just on the No. 5 side of the door that was blown out.

"By Mr. Tunks: I would have brought the rails right up to the door with the horse, and they would then have been pulled through the door, and we would all have taken them to No. 5 flat sheet. The whole seven of us would have gone right to the bord to help to draw the rails.

"By Mr. Napier: I did not know what Martin was there for. No. 5 truckers were there a fortnight before drawing rails. By the 'trap-door' I mean the door that was blown out."

1. *Mr. Gould.*] Did you see the bodies of Allen, Roper, Baker, and Jackson down the mine?—No, not on the Saturday morning.

2. You have no knowledge of your own as to where they were found?—No.

3. Who gave you your instructions the previous fortnight to draw the rails?—Mr. William Smith, the deputy.

4. That is the same man who gave you the instructions on the Saturday of the disaster?—Yes.

5. Who assisted you the previous [fortnight?—Baker, Jackson, Broadbent, Wilson—I do not remember the rest.

6. Baker and Jackson were lost in the explosion?—Yes.

7. On the previous fortnight, where did those men meet you?—In the little dip.

8. Did you on that occasion take the horse round to the little dip by the same road which you followed on the morning of the accident?—Yes.

9. And which way did the other men come to you?—Through No. 5.

10. What did you do at the little dip?—I was sent there to draw rails and take them to No. 5.

11. The whole of you?—Yes, seven of us.

12. And you all took them down to the door and had put them through?—Yes.

13. Can you point out just where you were at the time of the accident?—Yes. [Spot pointed out by witness.]

14. Which way were you going?—I was going along the old winch level, and in along the horse-road into the old workings.

15. Just where were the rails that you were to lift on the morning of the accident: were they at the same place as you were lifting them from on the fortnight previously?—Yes.

6. In which bord was that?—I could not say. It was in Legg's bord.