

the dip as the air was bad. We then went to Taupiri West shaft. From what I saw myself, and from what I heard, the figures on the plan Extended A represent approximately where the bodies were found. I went down the mine on Saturday last, 26th September. We travelled from the shaft and followed the road through the little dip, through the old dip, and came in by the winch level. We followed down the winch level to a point marked "Martin," and there we found the body of deceased Martin. It was not covered. It was in the old workings. I cannot say what he would be doing there. I was accompanied by Constable Wright and others. We merely got the body without examining the mine. I examined that portion of the mine yesterday in company with Professor Dixon and others. A cross within a square marks on the plan where there was a large accumulation of coaldust piled up against the pillar at the end of the bord. The dust appeared to have been blown down the bord from the direction of the body. In my opinion, the explosion originated in the vicinity where the body was found. The body was about a chain or chain and a half from the door marked on the plan. There was no sign of the door. We found bricks that had formed part of the stopping blown back to the spot marked with a circle with a cross in it. A fall had taken place apparently after the explosion, marked on the plan "New fall," and there was a fall which I took to be an old fall marked on the plan "Old fall." I have inspected other portions of the mine near where the explosion occurred. I have inspected all No. 5. All the signs show that the explosion originated at this spot. My opinion is that the explosion was caused by this man going into the old workings with a naked light. I have been in all the workings of the mine, except Taupiri West and No. 6 gig. The other parts have been examined by other parties. All the indications show that the explosion occurred at the place where I have indicated. I have never worked in Ralph's Mine. I do not think it would have required a very violent explosion to have blown out the door. I attribute the disaster to gas and coaldust combined. I could not tell what the place had been like previous to the explosion. About 4 ft. from the floor we found a white scum in the bords. It was from the floor to 4 ft. high. The old fall was about a chain in length, but we could not see how high it extended. I cannot say how long before the explosion the fall occurred. It was inspected on the 9th September by Wear. It was prior to the explosion that this fall occurred.

"By Mr. Bennie: There was fine dust against the pillar I have mentioned.

"By Coroner: I think a weekly inspection of these old workings was sufficient. I still think so, provided that before men are sent to work in them an examination is made of them.

"By Mr. Bennie: I have never known of any accumulation of gas in the old workings of Extended Mine. If there had been I should certainly have taken steps immediately to remove it."

1. *The Chairman.*] Have you anything further you would like to add to that statement?—There is only this: now that I have had the opportunity to make a better examination of that scum to which I referred, I would like to say that I do not think it has been caused by the fireclay floor.

2. *Mr. Wilford.*] Do you know where Hopper's body was found?—No, I scarcely knew any of the men in Ralph's.

3. It is No. 36?—That body was recovered on the night shift: I know nothing of it.

4. If No. 36 marked on the plan is Hopper's body you know its relative position to Martin's body?—Yes.

5. And you know the door at the end of bord No. 6?—Yes.

6. Would it be possible for anything to be hurled from the position where 43 is marked on the plan in No. 6 bord, where Martin's body was, through that doorway to where 36 is marked, or from 36 to 43? I want to know whether in your opinion any form of explosion could hurl an object from 36 to 43, or *vice versa*?—Yes, I believe it could.

7. Either way?—Yes.

8. That is to say, the open spaces are such that it would be possible for something in the vicinity of Martin's body (43) to be hurled to where 36 is shown?—Yes.

9. Did you notice that Hopper's body had a foot off?—I do not know.

10. Did you see a spare boot beside Martin's body (43)?—Yes.

11. With no foot in it?—That is so.

12. No lace either?—No.

13. And the nails are hardly worn?—That is so.

14. Do you know that Martin's body has two boots on?—Yes.

15. That is, all the clothing on poor Martin was his boots?—Yes.

16. It is quite clear that he had two boots on?—Yes.

17. Therefore the boot that was alongside Martin's body was not one of the boots he was wearing?—Certainly not.

18. It is possible it was a boot he was carrying—wildly possibly?—Yes.

19. It is also possible he was carrying his coat?—Yes.

20. His coat was not damaged?—I do not know. I have not seen it.

21. There was no other clothing of Martin's found?—I do not know.

22. You did not see any?—I do not think so.

23. Where is that boot?—The last time I saw it it was lying in the road.

24. You do not know whether Hopper had a foot missing?—No.

25. If 36 is Hopper it is possible for an explosion to have carried something from one to the other—from Martin to Hopper, or from Hopper to Martin?—Yes.

26. Do you agree from the position of Martin's body that the probability is that he entered bord No. 6 on the north end—the opposite end to the door end [plan explained]? From the position of that body and the position of the coat, ahead of where the body is, does it look to you as if he entered at that end or came in through this door?—My opinion now is that Martin came through the door.

27. It is higher there at the door than at the other end?—Yes.

28. Therefore if this place had gas in it, the most gas was there at the higher end?—Yes.

29. Therefore he would have to go through the most gas to the place where there is less gas?—No, I do not agree. I do not hold that there was gas in that bord at all on the morning of the explosion. The gas came out when he opened that door.