

6. When were you last working in Ralph's Mine?—I was one of the men discharged in the first trouble here. I was on the executive of the union, about two years ago.

7. You have not been in the mine since then?—No.

8. You are not allowed in?—No.

9. Do you know of any instances in Ralph's Mine of gas being found, after a long drill has been used in drilling?—Yes, sir.

10. How long ago?—The first case was, I think, when I had been in Ralph's Mine not more than a month.

11. How long ago?—About nine years.

12. Then, later on—on how many occasions?—On three occasions I have known gas to be lit twice in one place and once in another.

13. You are quite clear that the gas came in after the bore?—The first time it was just before knocking-off time. I put in a 4 ft. 6 in. hole the full length of a drill. Not having sufficient powder for a charge I went out, and when I came back there was a slight explosion of gas from the hole.

14. You lit it with a lamp?—Yes. In the same place later on we put a hole up in the roof to test for cover, and a good deal of gas exuded.

15. Do you remember three years ago something of that nature occurring when Mr. Fulton was there?—Yes.

16. Where was that?—In the little dip section.

17. Will you explain it?—We were working in a heading. It was the time that the men started at 7.30 a.m. and did not have crib till 12. Just as we were coming back Skellern walked up to the place and immediately there was quite a flash of gas. It was exuding from the cutting.

18. Skellern was then the deputy?—No, he was the shot-firer.

19. Who was the deputy?—Darby.

20. Was he there then?—No, only Skellern.

21. Those three instances you know of and remember quite distinctly?—Yes.

22. Do you know any instances of burns other than Kelly's case?—No.

23. *Mr. Tunks.*] Where did that ignition take place—the one you referred to as having occurred just before knocking-off time?—In the little dip section.

24. Were they all in the little dip section?—Yes.

25. You referred to one case which happened about three years ago—can you fix the date?—No, it was three or three and a half years ago.

26. Who was in charge of the mine at that time?—Mr. Wright.

27. It was before Mr. Fletcher's time?—Yes.

28. Can you show on the plan of the little dip section where the first of these cases occurred?—I know where it was.

29. Can you describe the place—perhaps Mr. Fletcher can then fix it on the plan?—In the first place it was on the horse-road, about the short road going into the workings from the first turn on the right—the third or fourth bord on the right-hand side.

30. How far would the bord be in?—We had just broken it away. We had just got the 14 ft. We would be in about 2 or 3 yards, counting from the 6 ft. narrow.

31. Was that where it happened twice?—Yes.

32. Whereabouts was the other one?—In the winch dip on the right-hand side of the heading. I do not know what you call the heading.

33. What did you do about these cases?—In the first instance, Mr. Hall was deputy and I reported both cases to him. In the second case, I did not consider it necessary to do so, because the official shot-firer was there.

34. Was any damage done?—I do not know that there was.

35. Was any damage done on any of the occasions?—No.

36. Anybody burned?—I do not know whether Skellern was. He might have got a little singed.

37. You do not know whether anybody was burned—Skellern did not complain?—It is such a long time ago I cannot say.

38. You were not burned?—No.

39. Were any of you burned?—No.

WILLIAM GEORGE WRIGHT, Police Constable, sworn and examined. (No. 12.)

1. *Mr. Wilford.*] You are a police constable stationed at Huntly?—Yes.

2. You were a member of the rescue party which first went into the mine after the explosion?—That is so.

3. The first or second man?—Yes, Mr. Jolly and myself were the first to go down.

4. I want to question you as to the positions in which some of the bodies were found. While working in the rescue party you helped to bring out some of them?—Yes, but as it was the first time I had ever been down this mine, and it was practically pitch dark, it would be hard for me to say where some of the bodies exactly were discovered.

5. In regard to Martin and Hopper, you know where Martin's body was found [No. 43]?—Yes.

6. Have you ever been down there?—Only to get the body.

7. I want you to tell the Commission what clothing was on Martin's body when he was found?—Just his boots and his socks to the top of his boots.

8. Cut off, as it were, along the top of the boot-leather?—Yes, he had not a stitch of clothing on him except the portion of his socks inside his boots and his boots.

9. Did you also see his coat?—No.

10. You do not know the position where his coat was found?—No.

11. Did you find a boot near Martin's?—Well, a few yards from him.