JOSEPH SCOTT examined.

118. *Mr. Park.*] What are you, Mr. Scott?—Mine-manager for the Blackball Coal Company.

119. Do you recollect the time of the Brunner accident?—Yes, it occurred on the 26th of March.

120. Did you make an examination of the mine afterwards?—Yes, four or five days afterwards. It took us three or four days to make the examination.

121. What part of the mine did you particularly examine?—The sump side.

122. That is, where most of the men had been working?—No, the majority of the men had been working on the opposite side.

123. Will you tell us why you particularly examined the sump side?—From what I saw during the time of the rescue work, I saw that this was the scene of the explosion.

124. And can you locate the place where you think the greatest force of the explosion was?—The greatest force occurred in No. 2 incline, and in No. 3, and No. 1; but the most damage was done in No. 2.

125. What were the evidences which made you come to that conclusion?—By the timber being knocked down, and blown up the hill. This led me to believe that the actual explosion had come up the incline.

126. Did you notice any particular place where the explosion, in your opinion, had started?—There is strong presumptive evidence that it occurred in No. 4 bord.

127. Is there any particular mark there?—Yes, there is evidence of a blown-out shot.

128. How long prior to your examination had that blown-out shot taken place?—I think it must be the cause of the explosion.

129. What were the marks you refer to?—The excessive charring which took place at this particular spot, and the coking of the coal-dust.

130. Did you see anything to lead you to believe that any one had been working there?—There were no tools in this bord; but that could be accounted for by the man firing that shot having taken them away after he got his shot ready.

131. Did you see any signs of a tramway?—Yes, there is one leading to this particular spot, within a few feet.

132. Is it laid as if ready for work?—Yes.

133. Where it would only be ready to work that bord?—Yes. I do not think a tub had ever been on that tramline, because there are one or two pieces of coal projecting out, which would have prevented a tub going in. It is evident that a tub had not been tried in it.

134. Would you suppose that it was ready for the purpose of working?—No; it was probably laid after that bord had been driven.

135. For the purpose of stripping?—Yes; there were two or three big blocks of coal that had fallen down from the shot, lying at the end of this road.

136. Did you notice the angle of the shot?—It was inclined towards the ground.

137. Then the inclination was to about 30ft.—the incline would reach the ground about 30ft. from the shot-hole?—That is about correct.

138. Did you see any marks of powder on the floor or sides of the bord?—Not of powder. When the shot was fired it would strike the ground at this particular point [indicated], that would raise a heavy cloud of dust which the flame following would ignite. Then, of course, it travelled down No. 3 or No. 2, and split at No. 3, and started up each of these inclines. The greatest force is shown in the incline; because you can understand that in jigging the coal down dust would be bound to be stirred up, and lodged in the timber. I have noticed in going through the mine that the greatest force is always shown on this incline. There is always a certain quantity of coal-dust there.

139. Have you been in mines where accidents have occurred?—Never a large explosion; only two or three small ones.

140. At any rate, you know the manner of jigging coal down an incline, which causes coal-dust to be blown off?—It must be blown off.

141. That is a fairly steep incline?—Yes; 1 in 8.

142. And the trucks would travel down fairly well?—Yes.

143. Therefore you think the greatest quantity of coal-dust would be in this incline?—Yes.

144. Did the trucks appear to have been in use?—Yes.

145. Did you see the tubs?—The tubs were there.

146. Are there not in that incline some tubs with the chains attached to them, showing that they were at work when the explosion took place?—Some tubs had been running there when the explosion took place.

147. And the force was great enough to turn them end for end?—Yes; some of them are blown right up to the other end of the bord.

148. And the posts in many cases are blown out and broken like matches in all these particular inclines?—Yes.

149. Why did this shot blow out?—Simply because they wanted to put more work on it than it was fit to do. Of course, it flew to the weakest part.

150. Why was it not able to do its work?—Because the coal was not prepared.

151. It was not under-cut?—No.

152. Did you measure the depth of the coal?—Yes; I found 2ft. 1in. left on.

153. And that was into the solid?—Yes.

154. And the shot had partially done its work?—It had blown a small piece off the throat of the hole.

155. Had it made any cracks into the solid?—I did not notice any, or no more than would naturally be there.