70. Would using that plan, in your opinion, have affected the stability of the workings? Which way was the error? Would it have made the incline appear to be farther from the fault?—Supposing the first plan is not correct, it would really make them farther away from the fault.

71. So that it would not have increased the danger, if they worked on the theory that the second plan was correct, if the wrong plan had been followed?—There would be no danger. I spoke to Mr. Bishop as to the question of the fault, and the third plan was sent, which was supposed to be very correct.

72. *Mr. Proud.*] Did you inspect the return airway?—Occasionally.

73. Not on the last occasion?—No. I will read my report: "27/11/95, Brunner Coal-mine.—Not working for want of trucks. Came in mid-level to west, and Nos. 10, 9, 8, 7, 6. [These are banks, although I have not said so.] Four places off No. 6, one off No. 7, one off No. 8, five off No. 10, one off No. 9. Air right; sufficient timbering. Some flakes and loose places, especially in level, which will be seen to. Fifty-six miners all told; twelve truckers and roadmen; nine fast places east of dip. A little gas has been seen here, but none to-day."

74. *Sir J. Hector.*] Where was that seen?—[Indicated on plan. Continuing reading notes:] "A few loose places in roof, which are to be seen to. Plenty of timber. Intake, 6ft. 6in. by 13ft.: This, worked out to an average of 127 and 137, gives 12,000 cubic feet per minute. Seventy men all told. Manager's report kept."

75. *Mr. Proud.*] Did you inspect the return-airway on that occasion?—No, I did not go through. The last time I came through that passage was in July. It was only occasionally I came through the return.

76. *Mr. Skellon.*] Is that return the only way the men can get out if the main roadway got blocked?—Yes, if the intake were blocked.

77. Do you not think it desirable for you to go through and see it is open at your inspections?—I proved clearly that the air was circulating through it freely.

78. *Sir J. Hector.*] How was the return-air circulated in the out-levels?—This return-air is in the natural strata. Of course, up the main dip it is separated by crib-stoppings filled with dirt.

79. *Mr. Proud.*] "Stopping" is not of brick?—No; this would stand better than brick.

80. *Sir J. Hector.*] Is it another distinct level?—The communication was made before this Act of 1891 was passed, so that it is in compliance with the Acts of 1891 and 1886, and, what is more, it has stood the test of explosion. I believe it runs from near the intake, in places, to 20ft. up a higher level—so I am told by Mr. Bishop.

81. Could you get through that?—It is small in places, but one can get through perfectly well.

82. Have you been through it?—Since the explosion, although there was timber blown right across, we could get through, and at the smallest place I had not to crawl. Lindop and Scott were there. At places it is low.

83. *Mr. Proud.*] Would it not conduce to the safety of the mine if you had two return-airways?—Certainly it would, but there is no provision under the Act for it. As long as there is a second outlet that is all the department can ask under the Act.

84. Would it not be well if signboards were put up to show the men where they could get out, and how?—Yes. Of course that would be an additional benefit to the men in the event of a disaster, but there is no provision for such under the Act. Miners know very well how the air goes, but there is nothing in the shape of direction-posts.

85. In England many miners have lost their lives through the men not being able to find their way out to the shaft after an accident. Would it not be well at convenient situations in the mine to place, for use in case of accident, plans or other indications of the easiest means of gaining access to the return-airways?—In this case, when these men started running from their faces in the west level, by that time the after-damp from the explosion would have been in the return-airway, and it would have been full of poisonous gas. Had they been in the return-airway itself, they would have been overcome all the same; it would have made no difference in this case.

86. *Sir J. Hector.*] When did you next visit the mine?—After the disaster, 27th March, at 2 a.m., 16½ hours after the explosion. I was in Westport when I heard of it. I heard of it at 6.15 p.m. on the 26th March; the wires were down.

87. Describe what you saw when you got to the mine?—I got to the mine and met Mr. Scott outside. I spoke to him as to whether he had reversed the fan, and I found it had not been reversed. After it had been running so long I thought there was no occasion for reversing it then. I think that course was the right one. I entered the engine-plane or level, and found there was no indication of violence until near the top of the main dip. On going along near the main dip there were props knocked out, and the boarding for the electric cable for transmission of power was down but the cable was not melted. On the caps there was dry dust sticking on the inside.

88. Did you take specimens of it?—I did not. I went to where the rescuers were and found they had taken the air down the old drive that was used for the pipe, and which had been part of the airway. I came right down the main dip, and noted that the stoppings were blown out.

89. These were the divisions between the descending and the ascending air?—Between the main dip and the back incline. I listened while coming down here in order to ascertain if I could hear any knocking of survivors going on in the mine, but I could hear nothing. I got down over falls to where the men were working. I noted that there was a good deal of water running down the dip, but there had always been a current of water running down this dip, keeping it more of less moist. I noticed the road was torn up in places; at other places there was dust heaped over the rails—a great quantity of dust.

90. That would be damp?—Oh, no. It was dry, covering the rails in places; and the rails were torn up in one place.

91. What lamp did you carry?—A safety-lamp. All the rescuers were working with saftey-lamps. I noticed there was an esccpe of air coming along this way to the back incline. When I