

got down the men were leading forward the air by bratticing. I inquired why there was this escape of air. They said it was in case of any survivors, in order that they might get some air and not after-damp alone to breathe; so I thought it should not be interfered with, but I had no hope.

92. How did the lamp you carried burn?—The lamp burned brightly where the men were falling down.

93. By that you mean there was something in the air that was sufficient to sicken the men without its affecting the lamps?—Yes; I thought, probably, there was a trace of carbonic oxide in the after-damp.

94. If it were after-damp, would the lamps burn brightly?—With the incoming air, which was then coming forward, in certain proportion, the lamps will burn brightly with after-damp, but not with it alone.

95. Will they burn in the white-damp—carbonic oxide?—Yes.

96. Do you know, from your own experience, that they will burn brightly?—No; it is very well known that lamps will burn in white-damp.

97. How far did you proceed into the mine?—The work of extending the brattice was being continued in the drive to block off those places where the air might escape. I did not take note how far I went. I tried with the Davy lamp at the stopping, behind where the men were working. I also tried in advance of where they were at work, but there was no sign of a "cap" in the lamp.

98. Did you go any way near the old workings?—I went ahead of the brattice a number of yards, and there was no sign of firedamp, so far as we could judge from the lamp.

99. How is that tunnel drained?—By the pump below the mid-level.

100. Under what is called the "cabin"?—Below the cabin.

101. How is it worked? Where is the power?—By a pump from the top of the dip. The motor is at the top of the incline.

102. Had that pump been disabled?—It has been disabled by the explosion.

103. Was the water rising?—I did not get as far as the water. I inquired how long it would take before the water would reach the lowest position where a body was expected to be found. I was told about four ordinary shifts of eight hours each.

104. Where were some men expected to have been working?—In the lowest place down.

105. For four shifts was that kept dry?—It was allowed to rise. I cannot tell you the position of the water before the explosion, but it was four shifts below the level of what you call the sump-drive.

106. Did you see any of the bodies recovered?—Yes; but more particularly on the following day.

107. Did you observe the dust? Was it much scorched and singed?—In the main level it was comparatively dry. And when I returned about 6 o'clock at night on the 27th it was then wet and slimy.

108. That was twelve hours afterwards?—About sixteen hours. I entered at 2 a.m., and this was about 6 in the evening.

109. *Mr. Proud.*] Did you notice if the timber was charred?—There was no timber burnt into charcoal in any part of the mine. We found plenty of charred dust, and a thick heavy or coked dust on the props and caps.

110. *Sir J. Hector.*] You think that remained as the result of the explosion?—As one result of the explosion. The following morning I came in with the rescuers, then engaged in taking out the bodies from the mid-level.

111. What impression was produced on you as to what had been the immediate cause of death?—The faces were blackened with dust, and there was a sign of burning of the clothes. The arms of some were in front of them, as if they had fallen on their faces when running away.

112. What do you mean by signs of burning? Had they woollen clothes on?—Yes, and the clothes were burnt. In the mid-level there were signs of flame.

113. How does the air leave this level?—In a place near the middle-level face I found a coat with a parcel in the pocket, and I took this piece of burnt paper from it [produced.]

114. That was in the level. If the men had been running they would have been following the air?—This was in the right-hand side coming down the dip.

115. You presume, at the time of the explosion, there was a current of air passing in that direction?—Yes. The men had started to run, and the man found farthest away—I believe to be Masters—was lying face down. It was on the low side of the level. He had only his woollen under-shirt on and his trousers and boots. There was no sign of burning on him. It was just inside where this paper was found.

116. *The Chairman.*] And he was nearest the scene of the explosion?—He was farthest away.

117. *Sir J. Hector.*] Did you continue to visit the mine some time after that?—Yes.

118. What measures were taken in the way of assisting to restore the mine?—After the bodies were got out we entered the mine by the sump-side to try and find out the origin of the explosion. There were Mr. Brown, of Denniston, Messrs. Scott, Lindop, and Hayes. I am telling you who were present the first day. Mr. Gordon came on the Monday.

119. What did you find?—We found that there was strong coked dust on the props, and signs of burning. The coal was charred, and there were signs of violence—props and brattice knocked down.

120. Were you able to get right into the workings?—Yes; I only came into the sump-side when the last body was recovered. Going in on Monday we led the current round here [indicated], and we could get right round the faces. I could give you my general impression as to the direction of the force.

121. Did you make any official report at that time?—Not till some time afterwards, because our investigations occupied about a fortnight. The direction of the explosion varied in different places. It seemed to come up No. 2 incline, also up the main incline and across to the