167. Is the mine now being worked under your instructions?—In regard to working the mine, nothing has been done on the sump-side, but it has resumed work at the pillars on the western side. With a view to safety in the Brunner Mine, I requested Mr. Bishop to see that none but safety-lamps were used, and that there should be no shot-firing—only wedging the coal down, or scalloping. Mr. Bishop acknowledged the receipt of my letter, agreeing to it.

168. *Mr. Park.*] When you got into the mine on the first occasion you say you found the men working down the main incline?—I came later, and they had started taking up the brattice-cloth from here [indicated], so that the air would travel down its old course—that is, the back drive which conveyed the pipes discharging the water [indicated], so that it would flow out by the water-level, and no doubt, in clearing out the drain, the rubbish and dirt would be thrown into the back drive, which was partly filled, and presented a very small section. I recollect quite well, because I crawled out from here on the pipes when coming up. The air-current came down the main drive.

169. *Mr. Park.*] Why did they work down that back drive?—Because the men were strangers, and did not know any better, and the mine presented a different appearance after the explosion to what it did before.

170. Where did you find the greatest force of the explosion?—The greatest force seemed to be up the main dip; it blew out the stoppings there, which divided it from the return. At the top of main dip there was a brick-wall which closed off the dynamo. That was blown right down. There was a piece of brick-work a yard square blown a number of yards in from where the wall was, in one solid piece.

171. Then the other stoppings coming down the drive, were they all thoroughly staunch?—They were crib-stoppings, packed by dirt and filled.

172. What size was the return?—It was of varying size, of a good size, excepting at one point along the fault where it is small, but it is efficient for the purpose; a good current of air, more than double required by the Act, was circulated.

173. What quantity of air would be taken out at the return?—On the 27th November, I think I told you, I found 12,000ft.

174. Was that in the return or intake?—What goes in must go out, but there would always be a chance of some coming in from near the fan. I requested that this should be made airtight. I saw the stoppings in the old drive.

175. You say it was sufficient. There is also the fact that there was a man found further towards the same level who seemed to have no marks of injury or burning, is that so?—I recollect seeing no marks of violence on the body; he seems to have been overcome by the after-damp and to have run to the water, because there is such a thing as water being able to neutralise bad air to some extent. The man who thinks of that would make for running water.

176. He was running in the direction of getting out of the mine?—Yes; but before he could get anywhere near the return the gas from the explosion would be in the return, so that he would be only running into foul air.

177. Do you say this explosion would extend in both directions, both upwards and outwards?—I have described the directions of force already.

178. Were there any others?—I do not quite understand the question. If you ask me as to any particular road I should say it seemed to go up the main drive to the cabin. We found some falls right across. The force would then come down with the other current and come out in some of the pillar-workings into No. 6 and No. 5 inclines, in western workings.

179. Then did it extend upwards along the main drive, along the return?—There were no signs of violence in the return or near the engine-plane, only coal-dust on the caps, and excepting what I have already told you.

180. Had it spent itself before it got to the top?—It seemed to have spent itself along the main dip, and outside this there would be a considerable quantity of water where dust could not very well lie.

181. Did you notice the direction of the shot? Was it a level shot or an inclined one?—It rose towards the roof, but the explosion would strike the floor. I told you the dust on the floor was coked, and also at the bottom of the prop there was blistered coal, and there was coal driven into the end of a prop lying end on.

182. Would there be any reason why there were no tools found there?—I cannot say anything more in regard to that than I have already said.

183. I want your opinion as an expert as to whether there was any chance of a workman taking his tools away in case of their being covered up with coal?—The man who would fire such a shot would certainly remove the evidence of his work. I have asked Mr. Bishop to see that the men ran no risk, and I have his various letters acknowledging that should be done.

184. Have you any idea of how long the men had warning before they were overtaken?—I inquired the distance any man would run, and I believe it was 50 or 60 yards; the others would run only a very short distance—say, 20 yards.

185. Did you hear of any warning having been given?—I hear that the bell from the dynamo had rung outside the mine about the time of the explosion. It might be that the explosion had something to do with the ringing of the bell.

186. Did you find any clue?—It was the burnt fuse.

187. Was it preserved?—Four miners examined the mine on behalf of the men, and they examined the fuse, and took it away. I regret I cannot produce it. I got a piece of that fuse from one of the miners the succeeding day, and could show it if you wish. It was similar fuse to the other.

188. Were there any signs of any other blown-out shot?—I examined all the fast places, but there were no signs.

189. *Mr. Beare.*] When you made your last inspection of the mine, did you consider the Act had been fully and sufficiently complied with?—I consider the Act was reasonably well observed;