291. It is not customary to water the intake airways: the watering theory would not have anything to do with it?—This was in the intake. There was some watering at Sengennydd, but it appeared not to be sufficient to prevent dust being ignited.

292. *Mr. Napier.*] Mr. Wilford quoted from this text-book at page 435 (Hughes), and you subscribed to this extract indicating what the Commission thought. Just over the page, however (page 436), the following paragraph occurs: "Action of moisture: It is now established that the presence of moisture effectually prevents the possibility of coaldust being ignited, and that, unfortunately, only the very smallest amounts are needed. It has consequently become the practice at many collieries where the coal is dry and dusty to water the main roadways regularly. In order to be efficient the water should be applied in such quantities as will simply damp the dust and prevent clouds of it being raised by any means. If the floor be properly watered it is sufficient to prevent any deposit of dust on the sides or the roof." Do you agree with that?—That is not part of our Commission's finding. I think you are now quoting the opinion of the writer of the book. Damping the surface of the roads is not sufficient. The experimental explosions at Eskmeals have shown that mere damping is not sufficient.

293. *Mr. Brown.*] In practice, in Great Britain, when watering is done, the sides, roof, and floor are thoroughly watered?—They ought to be.

294. Does that necessarily apply to the whole of the intake airway or only to the watered zones?—It does not apply to the watered zones only. I think there is a danger in having a mere zone protected, for we know that in an explosion the burning dust may be carried through a dust-free zone for some considerable distance, over 100 yards. My opinion is that zone-watering is not nearly so good as universal watering.

295. *Mr. Dowgray.*] There is a clause in the British Coal-mines Act dealing with coaldust: will you read it, please?—I think one of these clauses is very important. "No. 62. Prevention of Coaldust.—In every mine, unless the floor, roof, and sides of the roads are naturally wet throughout—(1) Arrangements shall be made to prevent as far as practicable coaldust from the screens entering the downcast shaft; and in the case of a mine newly opened after the passing of this Act no plant for the screening or sorting of coal shall be situated within a distance of eighty yards from any downcast shaft unless a written exemption is given by the Inspector of the division: (2) the tubs shall be so constructed and maintained so as to prevent as far as practicable coaldust escaping through the sides, ends, or floor of the tubs, but any tub which was in use in any mine at the date of the passing of this Act may, notwithstanding that it is not so constructed, continue to be used in that mine for a period of five years from the said date: (3) the floor, roof, and sides of the roads shall be systematically cleared so as to prevent as far as practicable coaldust accumulating: (4) such systematic steps, either by way of watering or otherwise, as may be laid down by the regulations of the mine shall be taken to prevent explosions of coaldust occurring or being carried along the roads: (5) the roads shall be examined daily, and a report (to be recorded in a book kept at the mine for that purpose) made on their condition as to coaldust and on the steps taken to mitigate danger therefrom."

296. You think that is a model clause in connection with coaldust?—I think the clauses are good. Of course, their efficiency depends upon the rules for carrying them out. The Home Office Committee has reported that in their opinion such a systematic step as is contemplated in clause 4, in lieu of watering, would be taken if the roads were treated with inert dust in such a way that the mixture of fine dust that could be easily raised into a cloud should always contain more than half its weight of incombustible matter.

DAVID MOLESWORTH, Sen., Miner, sworn and examined. (No. 2.)

1. *Mr. Wilford.*] For how long have you been mining, Mr. Molesworth?—I have worked for this company for thirty-two years.

2. Do you know this mine pretty well?—I do.

3. When were you last working there, in the mine?—About two years ago, some time after Mr. Fletcher came. I have been at the top since then.

4. I want to ask you whether your memory can carry you back to the longest distance from now when to your knowledge gas was known to exist in the mine?—Well, sir, I believe that the first time I saw it was about twelve or fourteen years ago. I can tell you exactly the place where it was found. It was at the time they were sinking what it called the little dip—I mean the little dip proper. I was examining the places for a cavil.

5. Who was in charge at the time you refer to?—Mr. William Dunn.

6. Now, in your own words, tell us what you saw?—Well, in the little dip two men were working named Tom O'Loughlin and Gus Rosenbank. Mr. Dunn got his lamp and we were looking at the roof, when we came to a borehole overhead. It went off and burnt out for a few seconds. After that I noticed that it lit up again every time you put your lamp near it.

7. It was bleeding?—It must have been.

8. Now, since then, I want you to tell us any other occasions when you have seen gas bleeding from boreholes?—Well, in the same region I have seen it after that in various parts of the mine.

9. You have been on top for about two years and a half?—Yes.

10. When you were working down below, was there much dust about at any time?—Yes, and there has been some lots of dusty stuff coming up since I have been on top, and more especially in the last month—just as if some one had been sweeping it to get rid of it.

11. How recently?—Well, the first time that I saw anything that indicated trouble to my mind was about twelve months ago, just before the strike. For a considerable time there was a lot of bad stuff coming through the screens.