

12. What sort of stuff?—Such as would come from old workings—that is, dust and coal and stone all mixed together—and some of it was smoking hot. That was about twelve months ago.

13. Where was that coming from?—I could not tell you what part of the mine, but I said to my mate that wherever it came from there was trouble.

14. Did it come right up?—Yes.

15. Was it still hot when it reached you?—Yes, I remember one day I picked up a lump and handed it to Clout, and it was so hot that he dropped it.

16. Who is Clout?—The man in charge on the top; he is considered my boss—the man in charge.

17. You passed this bit of hot stuff over to him and he dropped it?—Yes.

18. Was there any quantity of it coming from the mine, or did it just come up now and then?—No, there would be half skips and whole skips of it; then sometimes there would be dozens of skips full.

19. In how long?—In about an hour.

20. Did this come along on one day, or on several successive days?—On different days.

21. From that time you thought of the possibility of trouble?—Yes, I knew from that that there must be fire somewhere.

22. Did you ever come across any hot spots before you came up on top?—No, I never saw any hot spots in the mine before I came up.

23. Did you ever see watering done?—No, there was no watering done while I was down the mine.

24. The watering is of recent date?—Yes, very recent.

25. *Mr. Tunks.*] Can you say, Mr. Molesworth, roughly, how many times you have seen gas in the mine?—No, I cannot say how many times.

26. Have you seen it ten times?—Yes, I should say so. We had to put in boreholes every now and then. That was how we discovered the gas, when we were trying our roof. The gas burned till it was all burned away.

27. What were those boreholes put up there for?—To see how much coal there was over our heads.

28. Did you ever see gas come out of a shot-hole?—No, not in my time.

29. You say you have put up many of these boreholes yourself?—Yes, I should say I had in my thirty years below. We had to put them up every 6 ft. or thereabouts.

30. But you did not get gas in them all?—No.

31. Did you get gas in those places where you broke through into the roof?—In many instances I never pricked the roof at all. Where there was only 3 ft. or 4 ft. of coal over our heads it was usual to bore 9 ft. and if we got no roof there it was considered all right, and that there was quite enough coal.

32. What was done with that particular one which you saw with Mr. Dunn?—Nothing.

33. And nothing happened?—No.

34. You say that gas was found every time you tried it?—Yes.

35. How often did you try it?—Not very often—two or three times.

36. The same day?—No, at different times.

37. Had you any idea where that heated stuff was coming from?—No, I did not know where it came from.

38. You did not know whether it came from the old workings or not?—I do not know, but I should think it must have come from the old workings.

39. It was probably from a heated place that was being cleared out?—Yes.

40. So that the proper precaution was being taken with it?—Very likely.

41. Have you since had some heated stuff?—Only last month—very similar, but rather more cindery.

42. Also from old workings?—Yes, probably.

43. *The Chairman.*] In regard to the gas you say you discovered twelve or fourteen years ago, was that all exhausted in the one day?—Yes, it only lasted six or seven seconds.

44. Did you visit that borehole again after that date?—Yes.

45. Was there any gas in it then?—Yes, it was just the same.

46. How often did you see it?—About three or four times.

47. Did you report it at the time?—I did not need to do so because the deputy was with me.

48. It was his duty to do so?—Yes.

49. And on the several other occasions you speak of, did you get gas in the same quantity?—Yes, to the same extent.

50. Supposing you had not been working there, was there any way by means of which it would have been discovered? Would any one else have found it there?—Yes, the deputy.

51. Was it not too high?—He could have got up my ladder.

52. You had a ladder?—Yes.

53. You did not know what part of the mine that hot coal and stuff came from?—No, sir. That has been lying there for some considerable time before I left the workings down below.

54. You cannot say what part of the mine it came from?—No, the only thing I can say about it is that it was necessary that it should be got out or that something should be done in regard to it.

55. And in bringing it up to the surface the employees might have been doing the proper thing with it?—Yes.

56. You would not argue that there was any neglect?—No, not at all.