

176. Something had been done and you found no trace of gas?—Yes. There was a fall, and there was a brattice-cloth up the centre of the drive. On my next visit that canvas had been re-erected and there was no trace of gas.

177. You have referred to prosecuting the manager on three occasions: can you remember what those prosecutions were for?—One was to insist upon an engine-driver being on shift from 12 midnight till 8 a.m.

178. And it had nothing whatever to do with gas, or dust, or ventilation, or anything of the kind?—Nothing whatever.

179. It was a question of the construction of the rules?—Yes; it was merely a technical matter, and my interpretation was correct. The second case was in regard to a check inspector, Mr. Fulton, who was appointed after the strike. The check inspectors, of whom he was one, presented themselves at the Taupiri West Mine to make an examination, and the manager refused to let Mr. Fulton into the mine because he was not an employee of the colliery.

180. *Mr. Wilford.*] What was the manager prosecuted for?—For not allowing the check inspector to examine the mine.

181. *Mr. Tunks.*] Are those the only prosecutions you can think of?—I cannot remember any others.

182. *Mr. Macassey.*] How often would you inspect the Taupiri mines in the ordinary course of your duties?—About four times a year.

183. And I think you visited this mine very frequently during this year?—I had been seven or eight times into the mine this year before the explosion.

184. You say you visited this mine seven or eight times: does that mean that you were seven or eight times underground?—[After consulting diary] I have been actually in the mine on separate days eight times between May or June of this year and the date of the explosion.

185. Is it part of your duty to direct as to how the mining operations are to be carried on?—No.

186. I take it that it is your duty to see that the provisions of the Coal-mines Act and Regulations are duly complied with?—Yes, that is so.

187. Are you under the control of the Inspecting Engineer, or what is your position?—My position is this: I receive my instructions from the Under-Secretary of the Mines Department.

188. And what is the position of the Inspecting Engineer?—So far as I know I have no authority to take any instructions from him.

189. You have told us that prior to the date of the disaster you believed that the circumstances did not justify you in insisting upon the installation of safety-lamps?—Yes.

190. But since the explosion, and since hearing the evidence of Professor Dixon as to the inflammability of the coaldust, and after reading Dr. Maclaurin's report on the samples, you are satisfied that safety-lamps should be introduced?—Yes, I have ordered them, and they have been introduced into the mine.

191. Regarding these proceedings upon which Mr. Wilford examined you, did you ask for instructions from the Department?—Yes.

192. And you were advised to consult a solicitor?—Yes.

193. And that is the reason why you did not prosecute?—Yes.

194. And you say also that you never received any complaint about the mine?—Not during the past two years.

195. Neither from members of the present union nor the old one?—From neither of them.

196. *The Chairman.*] You said in reply to a question about your instructions to water the dust that you did that out of consideration for the workmen, and not with any idea that the dust might be dangerous. You had not in your mind the idea of an explosion, but only the inconvenience caused to the workmen?—Primarily, it was the inconvenience to the workmen which I was considering.

197. In your memo. left with the manager on the 2nd July you twice say that coaldust was found on the travelling-roads in dangerous quantity, and again in regard to No. 6 level: what did you mean by that?—I was also aware that coaldust had been stated by eminent authorities to have been a material factor in causing colliery disasters in cases where the ignition of carburetted-hydrogen gas or a blown-out shot caused the trouble.

198. You must have had in your mind the danger of an explosion?—Yes, I had that in my mind also, but primarily my instruction was given in order to remove what was an undoubted inconvenience to the men.

199. And you said that the dust should be removed or watered?—Yes.

200. Were your instructions carried out?—Partly. The foot-tracks, which would be the most dangerous part of the mine, were watered, so that a very material part of my instructions were carried out, thought not as fully as I would have liked.

201. Were you satisfied?—I was satisfied that the danger to a great extent was removed.

202. Would it not have been safer if the sides had been watered as well as the other places?—Yes, certainly; but, speaking roughly, 75 per cent. of the danger was removed.

203. When you make an inspection of a mine do you always test for gas, or only when the existence of gas has been reported to you?—In an open-light mine I only test for gas when it has been reported, or when a fall takes place which would create dangerous conditions.

204. Then your attention has to be directed to it before you make any special examination?—Yes, unless I know of a fall.

205. You do not make any test generally? We heard about the passages being beyond the reach of the miners' lanterns: how would you test in that place?—Well, sir, in a place that is beyond a man's height the miner with his pick makes a hole in the wall about 6 ft. high. Into