# THIRD AND FOURTH REPORTS

PROM THE

# SELECT COMMITTEE

NO

# ACCIDENTS IN COAL MINES;

TOGETHER WITH THE

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE,

# MINUTES OF EVIDENCE,

## AND AN

# I N D E X

TO THE FOUR REPORTS.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed, 1 & 26 June 1854.

277 & 325.

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# THIRD

# R E P O R T

FROM THE

# SELECT COMMITTEE

ON

# ACCIDENTS IN COAL MINES;

WITH THE

# MINUTES OF EVIDENCE,

TAKEN BEFORE THEM.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed, 1 June 1854.

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[ iv ]

Martis, 14° die Februarii, 1854.

Ordered, THAT a Select Committee be appointed to Inquire into the Causes of the numerous ACCIDENTS IN COAL MINES, with a view of suggesting the best Means for their Prevention.

Committee nominated, of-

Mr. Hutchins. Mr. Cayley. Mr. Stephenson. Mr. Ingham. Mr. Cumming Bruce. Mr. Hussey Vivian. Mr. Henry Austin Bruce. Mr. Mostyn. Mr. Locke. Mr. Cobbett. Mr. Farrer. Mr. Baird. Mr. Fitzroy. Colonel Pennant. Mr. Child.

Ordered, THAT the Committee have power to send for Persons, Papers, and Records.

Ordered, THAT Five be the Quorum of the Committee.

Veneris, 7° die Aprilis, 1854.

Ordered, THAT the Committee have power to report the Minutes of Evidence taken before them, from time to time, to The House.

Jovis, 27° die Aprilis, 1854.

Ordered, THAT Mr. Thicknesse be added to the Committee.

Jovis, 4° die Maii, 1854.

Ordered, THAT Colonel Pennant be discharged from further attendance on the Committee, and that Viscount Goderich be added thereto.

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# THIRD REPORT.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE appointed to inquire into the Causes of the numerous ACCIDENTS IN COAL MINES, with a view of suggesting the best Means for their Prevention, and who were empowered to Report the MINUTES OF EVIDENCE taken before them, from time to time, to The House,---

HAVE taken further Evidence on the Matters to them referred, which they have agreed to Report to The House.

1 June 1854.

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## INCE HALL COAL AND CANNEL WORKS:

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- 2. System of Working.
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- 4. How far expedient to sink another Shaft.
- 5. Other Evidence and Suggestions; Precautions now taken.
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SAFETY-LAMPS:

- 1. Their Advantages generally.
- 2. Difficulty in exploding them.

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- 3. Negligence in their use considered.
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# Ventilation and Working of the Mines. Nature of the Law in cases of Accidents, &c.

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Expediency of a large class of managers being better educated, as they might be, through the proposed school, 1876, 1877—Belief, that with two or three dozen exceptions, there is a great deficiency among the present managers of collieries, 1878– 1880. 1888–1892. 1896—Expediency of every manager understanding not only the circumstances of ventilation, &c., in his own pit, but the principles and circumstances of ventilation under all contingencies, 1881–1887—Slight acquaintance of owners with mining operations, 1893–1895.

- Sources of Accidents. Several sources to which witness attributes the occurrence of accidents, Smyth 1707-1711.
- South Shields Committee. Witness was the originator of the South Shields Committee; acted as secretary, and prepared the report, Mather 1446-1449.

South Staffordshire. See Staffordshire, &c., District.

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Splitting the Air. Importance of paying especial attention to the "splitting" and dissemination of the air when in the pit, Darlington 191, 192; Elliott 309-312; Taylor 1150, 1151; Mather 195-1521; Dunn 3438, 3439—Improvements of late years on this point, Darlington 192—Explanation of the present mode of splitting and circulating the air; diagrams referred to, Taylor 1152-1162—Necessity of splitting the air where the pillar-and-stall mode of working is employed, as in Northumberland; effect thereof upon the condition of the pit and the health of the colliers, Smyth 1715-1719 —Mode of splitting the air in the Midland Counties; defects of the system, Woodhouse 1925. 1998-2006, 2010, 2011—Advantage of the system, as adopted in Northumberland and Durham, adverted to by the Committee, Fourth Rep., p. 4.

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Staffordshire, Shropshire, and Worcestshire District. Demand for the labour of boys in South Staffordshire adverted 10, Tremenheere 1270-1273----Inconvenience of limiting the employment of boys underground in South Staffordshire to the age of twelve instead of ten years, ib. 1271-1273----Anxious and unsuccessful endeavours of the South Staffordshire iron-masters to promote education in their districts, 1274-1276.

The ventilation of collieries in the Midland Districts has much improved since 1849 through the more general adoption of artificial means, Woodhouse 1944-1947 — Respects in which the condition of these mines has improved of late or still needs improvement, *ib.* 1989-1992— Deficiency of the discipline, *ib.* 1991, 1992— Dangerous character of some of the mines, *ib.* 1993, 1994— Large number of collieries in the Midland District, *ib.* 2216. 2221, 2222.

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Insufficient size of the air-ways in the district, chiefly in South Staffordshire; reasons given for not enlarging them, Wynne 3023-3052-Attention paid to the air-ways in North

Staffordshire, Shropshire, and Worcestershire District-continued.

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- Steam Boilers. How far more desirable to provide by Act of Parliament, as suggested in the 13th proposition of the inspectors, than by rules, that every steam-boiler should be provided with a proper steam-gauge, water-gauge, and two safety-valves, Wood 3613-3617-----Recommendation of the Committee that every steam-boiler shall be provided with a proper steam-gauge, water-guage, and safety-valve, Fourth Rep. p. 8.
- Steam Engines. There should not be a steam-engine in any pit without a downcast and upcast shaft, Wynne 3276.——See also Spurbridge.

#### STEAM-JET:

- **1.** Its proper mode of Application considered.
  - 2. Its Advantages or otherwise, as compared with the Furnace.

#### 1. Its proper mode of Application considered :

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Necessity of the application of the jet being properly understood, Mather 1473. 1497. 1499—Reference to the application of the jet to certain manufactonies on the Tyne, as proving its action by propulsion against the law of expansion, *ib.* 1479, 1480—Propelling power of the jet illustrated by these applications, *ib.* 1536-1538—Necessity of not extending the jet beyond one foot sectional area, or thereabouts, *ib.* 1497—Large area adopted nevertheless in Mr. Wood's experiments, *ib.* 

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There are certain exceptional situations in which the steam-jet may be used with advantage; definition of these, *Elliott* 17-23. 26. 59. 291; *Woodhouse* 1986-1988; *Dobson* 2893-2904. 2919-2922 — In these exceptional cases it would only be useful as an auxiliary to the furnace, *Elliott* 24—Greatest quantity of air, in cubic feet, which may be passed through a shaft by means of the steam-jet, *ib*. 25. 27, 28. 34—Reason for Mr. Forster baving obtained a larger result than witness with the steam-jet, *ib*. 39-42 —Conclusion that the same amount of ventilation cannot be produced by the steam jet as by the furnace, from the same means and with the same economy, *ib*. 55-58.

High opinion entertained by witness of the power of the steam-jet, Darlington 71-75 ——Particular circumstance under which the application of the jet is superior to that of the furnace, *ib.* 75-78. 82. 84——When both are worked with pure air, the jet is greatly superior, *ib.* 76-78—Greater advantage and economy of the jet in proportion as the pit is more shallow, *ib.* 82-84——Greater capabilities of the jet if the combustion of the coal under the boiler be made perfect, *ib.* 96-99. 164——Advantage of the steam-jet at the top of the pit in shallow mines, and in cases of impending accident, *ib.* 166, 167 ——Inapplicability of the steam-jet to the ventilation of every mine, *ib.* 177—Advantage of using it when the mine is charged with explosive gas, *ib.*——Preference given to the steam-jet and furnace over any other process, *ib.* 184, 185.

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Decided preference of the steam-jet to the furnace, Mather 1472, 1473——Advantages of the steam-jet in deep as well as in shallow mines, *ib.* 1474——Advantages due to the controversy on the subject of the steam-jet and the furnace, Mather 1498; Fourth Rep. p. 4——Diagram, showing how Mr. Mather illustrates the greater power of the jet than of the furnace, Second Rep. p. 90——Several imperfect trials of the steam-jet have been 0.33. E4

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2. Its Advantages or otherwise, as compared with the Furnace-continued.

made in Scotland without success, Landale 2588-2596----Greater expense of the steamjet than of the furnace, or Struvé's machine, Dobson 2915.

In concluding that the steam-jet is on the whole inferior to the furnace, the Committee consider that the former may, under some circumstances, especially in shallow mines, be used with advantage, Fourth Rep. p. 4.

See also Alloa Mine (Scotland). Drumpelier Mine. Experiments in Ventilation. Furnace. Pumps, &c. Sanchie Pit.

- Steam-mill. Witness produces and explains the operation of the steam-mill formerly employed in lighting dangerous mines, Mather 1675-1679—The rudeness of this instrument as compared with the safety-lamp shows the advance of science in recent years, ib. 1678.
- Stoppings. Danger sometimes arising from stoppings, Darlington 200—Importance of the stoppings being strongly secured, Darlington 204. 217; Taylor 1166, 1167; Dunn 3440, 3441—Strong construction of the stoppings in the north of England; regulations about to be adopted on the subject, Taylor 1163-1165—Improvements being made to render stoppings as strong as possible, Mather 1522. 1525, 1526—Great importance of stoppings or regulators of solid coal in lieu of doors; their adoption generally considered, Smyth 1753-1760—Recommendation of the Committee in favour of very strong stoppings and crossings, Fourth Rep., p. 5.

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- Stourbridge. Particulars as to an accident near Stourbridge through the use of a steamengine where there was only one shaft; resolution of the manager to continue working the mine on the same principle notwithstanding witness's remonstrances, Wynne 3268-3278.
- Strikes. Effect of education on strikes, Mather 1652—Anticipated diminution in the number of strikes if the men be better educated, Tremenheere 1905, 1906. 1913-1931 —Effect of improvements in the social and physical condition of colliers in preventing strikes, ib. 1922—Non-occurrence of strikes where the wages do not vary, as in the copper trade near Swanses, ib. 1927-1931.
- Struvé's Apparatus. Successful application of Struvé's apparatus in ventilating the Westminster and Middle Duffryn collieries in Wales, Darlington 180-183, 188-190-Witness objects to the apparatus as uncertain and complicated, Mather 1469-1471; Dobson 2913, 2914. 2931-Large power of ventilation possessed by it, Woodhouse 1982-1985-Application of Struvé's machinery by witness at the Middle Duffryn Colliery and elsewhere; its advantages in producing more ventilation than any other appliance yet known, Dobson 2905-2912. 2917-2920. 2924-2930-Explanation by reference to plans of its application at Middle Duffryn after the late explosion; insufficiency on this occasion of the steam-jet and the furnace, ib. 2917-2929.

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Taylor, Thomas John. (Analysis of his Evidence.)—Viewer in the north of England, 1000 —Is mineral agent to the Duke of Northumberland, ib.—Has had many years' experience in managing coal mines, 1001—Has for several years made investigations concerning accidents, and has prepared statistical documents on the subject, 1002-1004 —Reads a tabular statement, which shows the yearly averages of fatal accidents in coal mines, comparing Great Britain and the Continent with Northumberland and Durham, 1005, 1006—Sources whence this table has been compiled, 1007—Explanation showing the comparative paucity of accidents in Northumberland and Durham, —Causes to which attributable, 1023-1025.

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1120-Statement delivered in showing the heights of the barometer on the days of the principal explosions is the mines of Durham and Northumberland since the year 1803; also on the day before and on the day after each explosion, Second Rep., Ec. p. 39. 40-Remarks upon this statement, showing how much may be due to the barometer, 1181-1125 —The explosions mainly occurred through sudden outbursts of gas, 1124, 1125.

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Tremenheere, Mr. Letter from Mr. Tremenheere, to the Chairman of the Committee, dated 27 May 1854, referring to a recent interview with the delegates of the workmen, and to the support promised thereat to the principle of his scheme of education, Third Rep., p. 98, 99—Anticipated support of witness's scheme in Wales, ib. 99.

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1. Generally.

2. Artificial Ventilation ; its expediency.

- 3. Natural Ventilation.
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#### 1. Generally :

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