

made it necessary to protect the pillars along the travelling road with a considerable number of props lagged behind. The workman who made the discovery, instead of making any attempt to stamp out the fire, as might have been done in this early stage, fled to the shaft bottom. This he reached after a difficult passage through the smoke, which quickly collected and poured up both North Deeps with the air current to the shaft.

He gave the alarm to the Underground Manager, who with an Overman immediately travelled directly towards the fire, through the smoke, on the Back Deep. Orders were given to the bottomers to follow down with buckets. When within seven hundred feet the glare of the fire was distinctly seen, extending across the Deep, and when the cross-cut was reached, the place was a mass of flames, and the top of the coal was scaling.

A shovel—the only appliance at hand—was of no practical use; it was impossible to get about the fire, on account of the dense smoke, and the Underground Manager, seeing that the fire was beyond his control, with the limited assistance of one or two men at hand, made for the shaft bottom for proper appliances and more help. The men at the bottom refused to give this, so he started back alone, but this time by way of the Angle Deep and No. 6 North Level, when he met some miners, who followed him to the fire.

Orders had been given to send down hose to connect with the seven-inch discharge from the lodgement nearby. The first lot was abandoned on the Angle Deep so that this connection was not made till the arrival of the second lot, by way of the South Deep.

Assisted by the air current, the smoke quickly gathered in volume, and barred all entrance to the pit by way of the shaft. Mr. McKenzie, the Manager, who was immediately notified, was compelled to enter the Pit by the travelling slope, which is driven from the crop about 1,300 feet north of the shaft. He first reduced the speed of the fan. On the way down he gave orders to remove the horses, but all were suffocated before this could be done. As travelling by either of the North Deeps was impossible, he proceeded over the air crossing at the fan shaft bottom and through the fan shaft to the South Deep, and down the South Deep to the fire.

Timber and brattice were then put up across the main deep as the only possible means of excluding air from the fire.

The seven-inch discharge line from the lodgement nearby was broken, and after considerable delay in receiving the hose, two lines were connected to it. One was carried directly to the fire cross-cut, while the other worked through the first cross-cut above the fire in the Main North Deep.