

On acquiring the property in 1886, the present lessees set about pumping out the water from the main seam, and as the evidence of the Commission shows, the work of re-opening was put in the hands of Mr. Wills, an English mining engineer, after his opinion as an expert had been obtained in the Spring of 1890.

The Acadia Coal Company take the lease in 1886 and try to reopen lost pits.

The work of re-opening met with disappointments heat was early experienced, and later on in 1892 firestink shewed that actual fire had developed within the bounds of the Foord pit workings. Where the old openings were entered they were found so crushed as to be impassable and of such a size, with top and sides so shattered, as to put the building of ranges of stoppings quite out of the question. The heat noted behind certain stoppings in the new work increased; in June a temperature of 96° Fah. was recorded, on Nov. 11th, dry hot ashes came through a crack from the overlying old workings, and on Nov. 1892, no other course was left than to again close the pit on account of the fire and the closing again of this pit renewed the danger to the mine. It ultimately suggested a second inquiry by a special committee.

In 1883 :- Very much the same question was brought in the Legislature in 1883, when it was popularly supposed that the rousing up the fire in the old crop workings meant the destruction of a lot of workable coal. On that occasion Mr. Gilpin, the Inspector, reported as follows :- April 3rd, 1883 - " * * * The steps hitherto taken with respect to the fires in the Foord pit and Cage pits have filled the former pit with water, and that portion of the Cage pit which is of value, so that the workable coal in these pits is not at present being injured by fire." And in the Departmental Report for that year he states on page 7 :- " A special report (a) was made to you relative to the cause, extent and effect of the fire, which has existed for over thirteen years in the workings of the abandoned mines (b) at this Colliery. I now give the following memo. on the subject : The Foster pit was sunk in the year 1866 to the main seam, near the face of the western workings of the Dalhousie pits, in the same seam. In May, 1870, a fire, of unknown origin, started in a stopping or wall between the workings of the new pit and of the Dalhousie pit. It being found impossible to put the fire out, the shaft and all openings likely to admit air were carefully closed. Owing to the great extent of coal worked near the crop of the main seam, complete exclusion of air was not attainable.

A candid report in 1883.

Underground fire continuous since 1870.

(a) No reference is made to this Special Report in the Mines Fires Report of 1895.
(b) See M. F. Rep., page 11, and the coal in pillars.