

pressure exercised on the roof?—It does not apply in this instance, because the water was constantly flowing up, and not confined. It has had no upward support to the mine at all; and, even if it had, there is the fact of the existence of the shales, and the shales dissolving and wearing themselves into mud. If the water was confined the same effect would take place, because the shales would soften and fall down. It would have no effect as to holding up the measures.

327. Was there, in fact, such a confinement of the water?—No.

328. Do you know when Mr. Cox visited the mine?—Yes.

329. Did he express any opinion to you?—He expressed an opinion the way matters had been put to him. When I put the matter before him he agreed with me as to the action of the water in the mine.

330. Its action upon the shales?—Yes.

331. I think you say in one portion of your report that, if Mr. Binns's survey was correct, you agreed with his action in closing the mine, or something to that effect. [Reports read: *vide* Appendix J and K.] In that report, where you appear to agree with Mr. Binns as to stopping all workings, I understand that you nowhere agree with him as to the propriety of putting water into the mine?—Certainly not.

332. Where you refer to the subject of falls, and the dangerous state of the mine as shown by this plan, what have you assumed as the thickness of the seam?—Ten feet.

333. If you ascertained that the seam was 3ft. to 4ft., do your remarks still stand?—No; they alter.

334. Where a fall is 3ft. 6in., and has been worked, any fall in it fills up and runs out so soon that it is safer down than up?—Yes.

335. Supposing you found in a mine something like the state of affairs shown on that plan, and had to uphold the roof, and as you have already told us you would not do so by letting water in, how would you uphold the roof in those circumstances: what orders would you give as Inspector?—As far as it affects the north side I would have taken the coal out and let the whole down; on the south side I would have most probably stowed (where the coal was thick) all the bords with waste material, leaving the main-dip heading free, so as to keep water pumped out.

336. With packing of some sort?—Yes; leaving one roadway clear, so as to pump and keep it dry.

337. Supposing you had to run a tramway through part of the working; supposing those 3ft. workings were falling through the falling of the workings, what plan would you take to support the right and left?—Brick it all the way, or use very stout timber: close-lathed roof, floor, and sides.

338. You have heard your reports read: is there any further explanation you would like to make upon those reports?—The only explanation I want to make is where I said I agree with the Inspector. You would see, from the tenor of the former report, that I totally disagreed with him as to the effect of the water. I agree with him in his report so far as he considered the work unsafe; that he did perfectly right in drawing the men out and stopping the workings. The first report was written before the water had come in, and this was written for the company after the water had come in.

339. Do you know Mr. Williams as a mine manager: do you consider him a competent manager?—Yes; I have known him for ten or twelve years, I think.

340. Did you know him at Kawakawa?—Yes.

341. I ask you, with your knowledge of Mr. Williams, can you conceive a man, having his own capital embarked in a mine, leaving pillars in the condition he apparently left these?—No; I do not think he would do it. I know the man, and I know he would not do it.

342. When you are working through these shales you say in any case they are always to be kept dry?—Yes.

343. Supposing they are drained and kept dry, how do they stand?—Very well.

344. Do they deteriorate with age?—They flake off a little, if the air is moist.

345. Do they soften?—No; if you keep the water away.

346. Have you come much in contact with Mr. Binns?—Yes; since he came to be Inspector.

347. Do you regard him as a gentleman of great experience in these matters?—When he took the office he had no experience: I proved it. When he visited the Westport works I could see, by the action he took and the way he did it, that he knew nothing about the work. I told him so at the time.

348. Have you had occasion to check Mr. Bishop's surveys in this mine?—No.

349. *Mr. Reid.*] I understand that, in preparing that plan, you took part from Bell's, part from Taylor's, and part from Twining's, and the other was made up from surveys made up by yourself?—Yes.

350. Is that the plan of Twining's from which you took?—Yes.

351. That is the plan you used to insert upon, that plan on the wall?—Yes; as far as the submarine workings are concerned.

352. Why did you take them from Twining's plan?—To strike a sort of general average between the two plans.

353. Are the measurements shown on your plan the exact measurements of Twining's?—Within a trifle.

354. You said that Twining's plan was carried out in a spirit of vindictiveness, to make the worst of everything?—Yes.

355. That being so, how was it you came to take part of that plan and stick it on this plan?—I was anxious to make what I considered a sort of general average from both plans.

356. If you thought that plan, at the time you took it, was unreliable—that it was carried out in a spirit of vindictiveness, to make the worst of everything—how was it you came to use it on your own plan?—Just to strike a sort of fair average on the whole thing.

357. You wished to give no guarantee as to its correctness?—It is an average of the two. I considered the way those workings stood, even on Twining's survey, and even with his exaggerations, that the pillars on this portion of the work were ample to withstand any pressure from the water; therefore I put it on. Mr. Binns, having taken the precaution to let the water in here, apparently was afraid to allow time for other people to be appointed by the company to inspect.