

110. Where did you get them from?—I took it myself when in the mine.

111. Did not Mr. Bennie carry some boxes for samples and were they not brought back empty?—I do not know.

112. Was that coal-scuttle coal Taupiri coal?—Yes, I believe so. I was told so.

113. Who told you so?—Everybody sitting in the room. But you also wish to know what the coal was I tested in Wellington?

114. Yes, please?—That was sent by the Minister of Mines.

115. Now, if you gave an interview at Auckland or Rotorua—supposing it can be found—it was prior to seeing the mine at all?—Obviously.

116. And when you made the report to the Minister it was prior to your knowledge of the conditions of the mine, such as were discovered afterwards?—I had been down the mine.

117. That report may be called, as far as this Commission is concerned, useless?—I do not think any particular stress may be laid on it.

118. You were not then in possession of the knowledge which you have now?—Certainly not.

119. You had not obtained your present knowledge then?—I think my knowledge is more valuable than it was then.

120. It would have been rather awkward if we had had to rely on your report and not on your evidence?—I said that this mine should be worked with safety-lamps. The whole question was whether similar mines should also be worked with safety-lamps.

121. You said in that report that until such lamps were procurable it would be safe to work with naked lights?—With the accompanying provisoes.

122. You made that report on inadequate knowledge?—Yes—incomplete knowledge.

123. Do you not think it was rash for a gentleman of your attainments?—No, I answered the questions to the best of my knowledge.

124. Your word goes a long way?—It was printed wrongly. The provisoes were put as alternatives in the newspapers and that altered the sense completely.

125. I am only judging by your statements that you wrote a report to the Minister without a knowledge of the subject?—That is false. I had a knowledge of the subject.

126. Did you have a proper knowledge of the conditions upon which you could write a report of any value?—I think the report was of value. I wrote it to the best of my belief and knowledge.

127. I ask you whether you would, in view of your present knowledge, change your report?—I have already stated that I would modify it, but not nullify it.

128. There was a British Royal Commission on Mines sitting in 1911?—It is still sitting.

129. You were not a member of that Commission, nor were you called by that Commission as a witness?—No.

130. And there were over one thousand witnesses called?—Possibly.

131. Why were you not called, if you are the expert you have suggested?—The Royal Commission on Mines did not carry out its work on a large scale because the Government were not able to give them the necessary funds. The mine-owners supplied funds, and the experiments were started at Altofts, in Yorkshire. Afterwards the apparatus was handed over to the Government on condition that the Government would carry on the experiments. Then an expert on explosives, Captain Desborough, and myself and a mining engineer were appointed to join an executive committee of the Home Office to carry on those experiments. The Government asked me to work on these experiments, and I have done so for three years and a half. All our reports have been furnished to the Government and have been published.

132. You are a Professor of Chemistry?—Yes.

133. Have you any diplomas in mining?—No, not one.

134. *Mr. Tunks.*] Assuming that the ventilation in a mine was adequate, would it be possible for an accumulation of gas to exist in the roof and you to find no gas at the height that a man could test?—It depends upon the height of the cavity and the strength of the current.

135. You do not mean in the ordinary roof or bord; I am speaking of the ordinary roof or bord. If the ventilation is adequate would you expect to find a dangerous accumulation of gas above the heights a man could test?—No, I should not expect it in good ventilation.

136. Now, a cavity, I take it, generally exists as the result of a fall?—Yes.

137. The fall liberating same gas?—It may do so.

138. Assuming that gas is found in the cavity?—Yes.

139. That forms in the cavity first?—Yes.

140. And I take it that if the fall is sufficient in area to enable the man to reach it, he can then make a satisfactory test for gas?—If he can reach up to the cavity, yes.

141. Would you say that an examination of old workings made by two men each carrying a safety-lamp might be an adequate examination?—I am speaking now as to the number of safety-lamps?—Yes.

142. And if you found that where the test for gas was being made both men were present, so that the safety-lamp of one was in reserve in case the other's went out, would you suggest that there was any temptation—that there would be any temptation to make a poor test there?—No, not if there were two.

143. Now, the examination has been directed in regard to the testing for gas in the mine as a whole. I think you understand that in this mine the old workings and the working-places are differentiated?—Yes.

144. And the examination to which your attention has been mainly directed—that of Wear—was an examination of old workings; was not that so?—Yes.

145. You have seen nothing, I think, of the method of examination of the working-places in this mine?—No.