

23. Then you did write and ask him?—Yes.

24. You wrote on the 8th January, 1914, asking for particulars of burnings that had occurred in the two previous years?—Yes.

25. You had forgotten that a minute ago?—No, sir.

26. The copy of the letter which you have handed to me is dated the 8th January, 1913, but it should be the 8th January, 1914, I think. If you never wrote until the 8th January, 1914, for particulars of these burnings in 1912 you waited two years, but if you wrote in 1913 you only waited one year?—Yes.

27. That is important?—Yes. What do you suggest?

28. When you wrote in January, 1914, was that the first time you had heard of them?—I think not.

29. Just remember where you did hear of them first. Did you hear of them before the beginning of this year? Mr. Fletcher never told you of them till replying to your letter of the 8th January this year in his letter of the 14th January, 1914?—On the 22nd March, 1912, I sent to the Under-Secretary for Mines, as a claim under the Coal-miners' Relief Fund, "David Conn, Huntly, arms, neck, and face burned, 16/2/12 to 14/3/12."

30. Were they reported to you by the mine-manager?—I believe they were.

31. Will you find the report?—I will telegraph to my clerk at Thames for it.

32. It is quite clear you did, but I want you to tell me did Mr. Fletcher tell you about it?—About what?

33. Those three injuries?—In all probability he did.

34. Then why did he write to you on the 14th January of this year about it?—In reply to my letter.

35. What are the special reasons?—I wanted to know what accidents had occurred in the mine.

36. Did you think then that Mr. Fletcher had neglected to notify you of some accidents? If you had had the notifications you would not want to write for them, would you?—[No answer.]

37. I do not think you have these other notifications from him?—I would not say that I have.

38. Did you receive any further information from Mr. Fletcher in reference to the burnings in reply to your letter of the 8th January, 1914, over and above that already received by notification in writing previously?—I think there are only the three referred to.

39. What I am trying to find out is this: if these accidents occurred in 1912 and Mr. Fletcher never notified you, how did that come out?—In consequence of a conversation with Mr. Reed, Inspecting Engineer of Mines, I asked for that report.

40. That is why you wrote?—Yes.

41. Did not you get some information locally in Huntly?—No.

42. Now, if that is so, why should you write to get any more information than you already had?—If you will turn to the Coal-mines Act I think you will find that the manager has to report all serious accidents. It is not absolutely necessary for him to report accidents of that nature.

43. Can you produce the deputy's report-books and your report-books regarding these burnings?—No.

44. Why not?—They are not serious accidents, and were not reported to me, very likely. Not being considered serious accidents I would not make a special visit of inspection.

45. Is that your whole answer?—Yes.

46. Now, turn up and tell me for how long the men got sick-pay for these non-serious accidents?—Willcox was off eighteen working-days, Conn fourteen days.

47. Ruston?—I have no note of that.

48. You never heard of that until you got Mr. Fletcher's letter of the 14th January, 1914?—I remember when visiting the mine Mr. Fletcher showed me the place where Ruston was singed.

49. But he did report further on?—No, I could not say.

50. Do you keep copies of all your reports to the Department?—Yes.

51. Have you all those reports for the last two years in connection with the Taupiri mines?—I have the 1913 reports.

52. And part of 1912?—No.

53. Do you report to the Department all serious accidents due to ignitions of gas?—I report all serious ones.

54. Do you consider any burn by the ignition of gas a serious accident?—No.

55. Then the mere fact that there is escaping gas which causes a burn is not, *prima facie*, sufficient to report?—It just depends to what extent the man is injured.

56. The mere fact that he is burned from an ignition of gas is not sufficient to report?—It has not been in the past.

57. Do you report that gas has been found there without there is an ignition of gas?—Not unless it is a serious accident; but on my visit I inspect the place.

58. *The Chairman.*] If there was an escape of gas which caused a burn, would you report that?—Not unless the burn was serious.

59. The mere escape of gas you would not report?—Not unless the quantity of gas was a dangerous quantity.

60. *Mr. Wilford.*] Supposing there was a big escape of gas and a small burn, what would you do?—Draw the manager's attention to it and report to Wellington, and ask for permission to prosecute him.

61. Have you done so?—Yes. [Letter, 7th August, 1914, produced.]

62. This letter is dated the 7th August this year?—Yes.