

273. That was a working-place in the old part of the mine?—No, a small section of the mine where it was difficult to get the coal out. In a short time that section would be worked out.

274. Those workings had been abandoned for the time being?—Yes, and until they could get at it in a more economical way.

275. In connection with your duties as Inspector of Mines, have you found yourself hampered in any way under the present Act, or have you any suggestions to make regarding the advisability of getting more power in reference to the installation of safety-lamps in a mine, as there is in the English Act?—No; I have not read the English Act.

276. You will see that the Inspector there has the power to order safety-lamps, especially if there is $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of gas in the main return airways?—If they work it we can work it.

277. If it is possible there to ascertain $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of gas in the return airway, it is possible to do so here?—Yes, we can send samples for analysis.

278. And you think that if we incorporated the whole of their provisions regarding safety-lamps in our Act it would have a beneficial effect?—That would be too much to say, because I have not read the section; but we generally regard the provisions of the English Act as setting forth a standard which we can reasonably follow.

279. Do you think it would be better if our Act provided that the Inspector of Mines could immediately insist upon the introduction of safety-lamps?—Yes, I certainly think it would be better, and indeed very necessary.

280. You have had analysis made, I understand, of mine-airs from Taupiri mines?—Yes, it was made by Dr. Maclaurin, Dominion Analyst, and reads as follows:—

“No. 1 at No. 2 pump; No. 2 at No. 5 level north.

Analyses—					No. 1.	No. 2.
Methane (CH ₄)	...	...	...	...	0·09	Nil
Carbon dioxide (CO ₂)	...	...	...	...	0·20	0·10
Oxygen	...	...	...	...	20·26	20·80
Nitrogen	...	...	...	...	79·15	79·10
					100·00	100·00”

281. *Mr. Dowgray.*] On what date was that taken?—The 16th September, four days after the disaster. The temperature-reading by the hydrometer was 70° wet bulb and 71° dry bulb, so that the air was almost completely saturated. That was at the same time.

282. How can you lay any stress on that analysis in view of the fact that such a volume of gas was discovered? That gas had been liberated during that time?—I measured the air and found 9,554 cubic feet per minute.

283. That was air which had just come from the surface, so that it could not be taken as direct evidence of the state of the ventilation at the time of the accident?—I admit it may have been short-circuited.

284. It was only going round a very small portion of the mine?—I could not say.

285. How would you account for such a volume of gas there, and also fires in the return airways?—The analysis shows that there was no carburetted hydrogen in the air.

286. But the air-crossing was blocked?—No, this air-crossing was not blocked.

287. It certainly eased your conscience to proceed further, but it must be quite clear to you that the air had not reached that volume of gas at that particular time, or your sample would not have been as clear?—It was just about that time that the accumulation of gas was detected by Walter Mills on the Monday, the 14th.

288. Had any analysis been taken of the air in these airways before?—No analysis of the air in the return airways had been made prior to the explosion.

289. The only thing that that shows is that every precaution was taken by the company in connection with the rescue party after the explosion?—Yes, that is so.

290. Have you any suggestions to offer in regard to the amendment of the Coal-mines Act? Do you think if the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Mines were embodied in the Act it would have the effect of lessening the risk of similar accidents? There is a clause which gives the Inspector of Mines greater power?—I think the Inspector of Mines should have more power than he has at present.

291. With reference to the system of the workings, is it not clearly the duty of the Inspector of Mines to see that the provisions of the Coal-mines Act are carried out irrespective of employees and employers?—Yes, that is so.

292. When you came back to the Huntly Mine on special occasions you did so in order to satisfy yourself that the conditions were satisfactory?—Yes, to see whether they were or not.

Mr. BENNIE recalled.

293. *Mr. Macassey.*] What experience have you had, coal-mining and gold-mining?—About forty-seven years.

294. I believe, in England, Scotland, New South Wales, and New Zealand?—Yes.

295. Have you managed mines in New Zealand?—Yes, the Mokau Mine, for about two years.

296. And I think you won the gold medal at the Waihi School of Mines?—Yes.

297. You have been Inspector of Mines for this district for about seven years?—Yes.

298. And previous to that you were an Assistant Inspector?—Yes, with headquarters at Waihi.

299. During the term you have been Assistant Inspector and Inspector how many serious accidents have been reported from Ralph's Mine?—Only one by burning by gas.

300. That was the case of Kelly in July?—Yes.