

1. *The Chairman.*] That is the evidence given by you at the inquest before the Coroner: is it correct?—Yes.

2. *Mr. Wilford.*] I understand, Mr Wear, you have had considerable experience in mines?—I have never done anything else.

3. For some forty-odd years?—Forty-seven years.

4. But you have been on this new work only for the past few years?—I have been engaged examining the old workings for the past twelve months, but off and on for four years.

5. Now, I understand that it was your duty to go round the old workings to look for fire and not to look for gas?—That is right.

6. And I suppose that what you had not to do you did not do?—If I thought there was gas I would examine for it.

7. I am speaking generally: you usually tested for fire and not for gas?—Yes, speaking generally.

8. Did you do more than you had to do?—Yes, on occasions if there was anything like gas about.

9. That is to say, if your suspicions were aroused?—Yes.

10. If they were not, you kept on going?—I kept on going.

11. Have you ever had any special training in testing for gas?—No.

12. Have you ever passed an examination in gas testing?—No.

13. Do you know that there is such an examination in New Zealand which men can pass if they desire?—Yes.

14. And have you never tendered yourself for that examination?—I thought of going to Auckland at the Exhibition time for it, but I did not.

15. Supposing you were standing in a bord the height of this room: how could you test that bord for gas?—I would test it as far as I could reach.

16. Show me?—Something like that. [Witness is handed a lamp, and demonstrates with same.]

17. Do you mean to say you could see the flame of that lamp if you kept it there [at arm's length above his head]?—There it is.

18. You could not see it at all if you put it up like that?—No.

19. Would you get a line with your eye between the rim and the flame?—I do not know.

20. You say you do not take a line between the rim and the flame, but you simply look at the flame: is that right?—Yes.

21. Can you get a 3-per-cent. test in that way, let alone 1½ or 2?—I think so.

22. What height are you?—About 5 ft. 8 in.

23. And if you went into any bord that was over 7 ft. high you could not test it?—Yes, and I have done so.

24. How?—Where there has been a fall.

25. Where there has been no fall, I mean?—No, I have not.

26. And how many bords over 7 ft. are there in the part of the mine which you have to go through?—That I could not tell you.

27. Miles of them?—I could not tell you.

28. Are there miles of them?—I do not know.

29. Would you deny that there are miles?—No, I would not.

30. Then, if there are miles or bords in the part of the mine that you had to inspect, and there were no falls in those miles, you never inspected them?—I never inspected them unless they were low bords.

31. That applies to those over about 7 ft.?—Providing the air is good.

32. If the air is bad how do you inspect a place 20 ft. high?—I do not inspect it at all.

33. Are there ladders provided for inspection purposes in those high places?—Not in the old workings. There are one or two on top of these falls, but that is all.

34. Are there any ladders provided in that section at all for inspection purposes?—Yes.

35. How many—one?—Do you mean in the old workings or in that place?

36. In that place?—I know nothing about them.

37. In the old workings?—About four or five.

38. And how many miles of bords?—Well, I do not know whether you would call it "miles."

39. How many miles of bords do you have to inspect?—I do not know.

40. Between one and twenty miles?—Two or three miles.

41. Then this Commission can understand that it was purely voluntary on your part whether you should look for gas?—That is quite correct.

42. As a matter of fact you had the right to please yourself?—Yes, I could please myself.

43. And you did?—I did.

44. Did you ever get any gas except where there was a fall—be careful, because I am going to ask you about Molesworth?—Yes, once.

45. Where was that?—In what was called Dooley's dip, No. 8 section.

46. When was that?—A long while ago.

47. How long ago?—I had not started inspecting the old workings then: it is, I suppose, about twelve months ago.

48. *The Chairman.*] Is that in the old workings?—It was in an old place—there are new places and old places.

49. *Mr. Wilford.*] Will you please explain the difference between "old workings" and "disused workings"?—I would call them all "old workings" where the men were not getting the coal.

50. There is no difference in your evidence between "disused" and "old" workings?—Yes.