

1032. But these shaft-pillars did not contribute to this disaster?—No, but they are a source of danger.

1033. Have you measured the shaft-pillars?—No, but your surveyor has, and I have his plan.

1034. You are taking your evidence from the plan?—And my recent inspection.

1035. Did you make any calculation as to the cubic contents of the pillars?—I did not.

1036. Then your statement that the pillars are insufficient is based upon your observance of the pillars and the plan, without any computation?—No, but it is palpable without computation.

1037. Then, from that examination, without measurement, you say that it is palpable that the pillars are insufficient?—There are no pillars of any magnitude, and round about the shaft is riddled with workings.

1038. Round about the shaft is not safe?—It is not safe.

1039. Have you any idea how long it has been as it is now?—A considerable time, I believe.

1040. Do you know whether any change of any kind has taken place in those pillars?—There must have been.

1041. Do you know whether any change has been noticed?—I saw the change myself.

1042. You do know it, because you saw it?—Yes.

1043. Since when?—It is going on all the time.

1044. Did you take notice of those pillars when you were here before?—No.

1045. How can you say, then?—Because the coal is piled up. The pillars fret so much that we had to move the broken coal aside to use our instruments for air-measurement. Once fretting commences it continues.

1046. Was there any appreciable effect on those pillars?—Yes.

1047. To what extent—say, $\frac{1}{8}$ in.?—Piles of broken coal were near the pillars in places.

1048. Which you assume have come from the pillars?—It could have come from nowhere else.

1049. What do you suggest should be done to remedy the trouble?—I think it is a difficult problem. I would build up circular stone pillars. The area of the shaft-pillars in square yards should be equal to sixteen times the depth in fathoms; that is an approximate formula.

1050. Have you made any calculation to see whether that formula has been complied with?—I can see that it has not.

1051. Then you made some remark about the arbitration proceedings which this company engaged in: that was in connection with the second shaft across the river, was it not?—Yes.

1052. And I think you said the company eluded its duty?—Yes, but they won the arbitration case.

1053. Now, do you suggest that the company concealed anything, or did anything that was not correct?—They fought the case, and won; but they should not have done so.

1054. The tribunal was two mine-managers and Mr. Justice Denniston?—I know; but the Inspector had no expert assistance. Your company had more expert witnesses, and thereby won the case, in my opinion.

1055. I think the Inspector was represented by Mr. F. E. Baume?—Possibly; but I knew he would be beaten through absence of expert evidence.

1056. That was no reflection upon the company?—Not a bit.

1057. There is one other small matter I wish to refer to: you said you understood that men have been burned in the winning-places in Ralph's: have you any evidence of that—as to the burnings in the working-places?—I meant the new workings, where you have got a better air-current than in the old workings.

1058. Actual working-faces?—Where there ought to be a current of air men have received burns.

1059. Which are better ventilated than the old workings: what is your evidence?—Kelly was not burned in the old workings.

1060. No; he was burned in the stone drive?—That is so; not in old workings.

1061. You were referring to Kelly's case?—Yes.

1062. Is there any other case?—I do not know exactly where those other men were when they were burned. Mr. Fletcher can tell you, perhaps; but they were not in the old workings.

1063. The only one you know of is Kelly?—I understand that Conn and Willcox were also burned in new workings.

1064. When you made that statement, what was the ground for your belief?—That is my impression. It has been on my mind that those men were burned in new workings. I remember reading that it was in some new drive that was being put in.

1065. When did you get that?—At the time of Bennie's report.

1066. You knew of Kelly's case at the time?—Yes; that was the only case Mr. Fletcher properly reported at the time.

1067. Kelly's case is the only case that you can remember on which you based this statement?—I believed that the others were burned in new workings, too. I have always believed so.

1068. What made you believe it?—It was upon my mind that nobody was allowed in the old workings. The new workings only are where men should be allowed to go.

1069. Since when has it been on your mind?—As far back as when Mr. Fletcher's report came in on the 14th February; he did not then say that they were in the old workings. I took it then that they were in the new workings.

1070. Now we come to the question of the samples. You said something about Professor Dixon taking part of your samples without your permission. What did you mean?—He went down to Wellington, and without asking my permission he proceeded to the Dominion Laboratory, and got a coal-dust sample of the mine. He tested it, and came back here and gave evidence without admitting