

as it is a flame-producing explosive, and this company has purchased this unpermitted explosive to the danger of the lives of the miners.

1218. Are you finished?—I have told the truth.

1219. Now, do I understand you to say that Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Bishop said to Mr. Bennie that monobel without the numeral was a permitted explosive?—Mr. Bennie informed me so. He stated that there was no numeral mentioned.

1220. But they did not say to him, "Monobel without the numeral is a permitted explosive"?—No; I have no doubt that they took care not to use the word "numeral."

1221. Are you a thought-reader?—No, but one would wish to be when that sort of thing is being done.

1222. If you were, as you say, informed by Mr. Leggo that monobel was a permitted explosive, do you not think it is quite possible that he informed Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Bishop to the same effect?—I do not know what he told them.

1223. You were misled, were you not, by Mr. Leggo?—Yes, at first.

1224. Is it not possible, therefore, that they were also misled?—You are assuming too much.

1225. By Mr. Leggo, intentionally or unintentionally?—I do not know. It depended upon their object. They were not likely to be both misled.

1226. How did it come about that you were misled?—I was misled in this manner: He informed me at night that the company was using monobel No. 1, but in the morning I was informed otherwise.

1227. "This is another performance of the company." Will you kindly say what are the other performances of the company?—Working the Taupiri Extended with monobel, which is not a permitted explosive, and after receipt of a notice from the Inspector that only Home Office permitted explosives must be used.

1228. These are not specified performances?—Yes.

1229. Well, then, I want to assume that we cannot get a permitted explosive in the Dominion: are you going to close down all the mines in the Dominion?—I would close down all those which are gas-producing and dangerous from coaldust. If human life is at stake, as it is here, I would close down every such mine until precautionary measures are established.

1230. Are you going to say that blasting-powder can still be used in mines in New Zealand?—If a mine is not suspected to be dangerous owing to gas and dust, and is a naked-light mine, I would permit the use of blasting-powder if I had power.

1231. Is this the only mine at the present time in which permitted explosives only are to be used?—This is the first. The Department is dealing with this company first, but the Department is getting on to the others as fast as possible. The Inspectors are vigilantly searching for dangerous conditions. The new Bill is on the verge of becoming an Act, and the Department is losing no time.

1232. So far as this company is concerned, you are not waiting for the Bill to become an Act?—No. The Inspector is taking this action against you under section 56.

1233. If it applies to this company, does it not also apply to every other mine in New Zealand?—Directly the Department finds them taking risks.

1234. Are you going to wait for some explosions in the other mines?—No, the Inspectors are sending the dust for analysis immediately.

1235. Are you waiting for analyses before you take any action?—Yes, the Department must experiment with the dust. The Inspectors of Mines are acting.

1236. Is it not a fact that monobel has been largely used in New Zealand?—It may have been largely used in New Zealand.

1237. Do you know that it is so?—No, I do not know it is so. It may have been. I will not dispute your word if you say it is.

1238. Is it not your business to know?—No, it is not my business to know the quantities and varieties of all explosives that are being used in New Zealand.

1239. Is it largely used in New Zealand?—I do not know. There is an Inspector of Explosives, who has charge of that department; you may inquire from him.

1240. Are you acting in conjunction with the Inspector of Explosives now?—I am not acting in conjunction with anybody.

1241. What has he got to do with your knowledge of what explosives are being used in coal-mines?—Nothing whatever.

1242. Do you mean to tell me that you are not aware of what explosives are used?—I know what explosives are used, but I do not know the quantities.

1243. Did you know that monobel was being used in New Zealand?—I did.

1244. What other explosive?—Blasting-powder.

1245. What else?—I believe gelignite is being used in New Zealand, but the quantities I do not know.

1246. I may take it, so far as you are concerned, that the only thing the company can do is to close down the mine until they can get permitted explosives?—I am not the Inspector of Mines for this district; he only can close the mine.

1247. That is your opinion?—If I were Inspector of Mines I would close the mine until a safe explosive was obtained.

1248. Although a permitted explosive is not to be got in the Dominion and safety-lamps are being used?—I do not know that.

1249. Would you take into account, if you were Inspector of Mines, the fact that permitted explosives could not be got in the Dominion, in dealing with this mine?—No, I would prefer the safety of human life rather than let the company receive the profit from a month's work at the risk of their employees' lives.