

137. *Mr. Herries.*] There it no stopping done?—No.

138. It is all being taken out by day-labour?—Yes.

139. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Do you know the number of mines that have to be inspected on the West Coast?—I enumerated twelve of what you might term fairly large mines.

140. What has been your experience of mining?—I have been mining for the last twenty years.

141. Have you ever held any responsible position as a miner?—Certainly.

142. Do you think you have any clear knowledge as to what the duties of an Inspector of Mines ought to be?—Yes.

143. What are they?—The duty of an Inspector of Mines, in my opinion, is to see first of all that the ventilation provided for a mine is sufficient and abundant. In the next place to see that the timbering of the mine is carried out on proper lines, and that the workings are carried on in a safe and secure way. In coal-mines, and even in quartz-mines, to ascertain what gases exist and the quantity of each of the gases, and generally to look after the safety and health of the miners.

144. Have you any intimate local knowledge of the West Coast?—Yes.

145. How much of it do you know?—I was born in the West Coast and have lived on it nearly all my life.

146. Have you ever been down to the Haast?—No.

147. Have you been to Okarito?—No.

148. Have you been down to the Wilberforce?—On the Canterbury side I have.

149. Have you any idea of the distance between the Haast and Okarito?—My idea of it would be that it is about sixty miles.

150. Have you any idea of the distance from Hokitika to Ross?—About thirty miles I think.

151. And from Hokitika to the Wilberforce Reefs?—Thirty-odd miles.

152. Is that the nearest you can get to it?—I have not been that way.

153. Supposing it is eighty miles?—I do not think it would be eighty miles.

154. Now, coming back, have you ever been up the Taipo and Gillie's Creek Reefs?—I have never been up to the Reefs but I know the direction they are in. I have been along the West Coast Road into the Taipo. That is not a great distance from Kumara. It might be twenty miles from the outside.

155. It is forty-five miles to the Reefs?—It might be. I have not been to the Reefs.

156. You say that two Inspectors are sufficient for all the mines between the Haast and Puponga, and from there down to Marlborough?—I might say that I do not think there are any workings going on at the Wilberforce and Kelly's Creek. I am talking about places where miners are working.

157. There are men often prospecting at the Wilberforce. How long do you think it would take a man to travel and inspect dredges, coal-mines, and quartz-mines from the Haast to Puponga down to Deep Creek in Marlborough?—My opinion is this, from my knowledge of the whole thing, that if they visit the twelve mines I enumerated this morning once a month and the other small mines once in two or three months, they would have ample time to do it in.

158. Do you know that these Inspectors have to inspect every mine where a man is employed either at dredging, sluicing claim, or in underground workings wherever they are?—Yes; but there are not many sluicing claims to inspect.

159. And if there are any prospecting claims which are subsidised by the Government they have to inspect them?—I am not aware of any. I know they have to report on the locality where prospecting is going on with local assistance before the grant is given by the local authority.

160. They have to report upon the amount of work done?—Yes.

161. How long do you think it would take a man to travel from the Haast to Puponga and to report on a mine every day?—Do you mean to take the whole of the mines right along?

162. Yes?—I daresay he would do it in a month.

163. How long does it take a man to inspect every mine from Westport to Reefton and down the Grey Valley?—I would give him a week at Westport, three days up the Buller, four days in Reefton, and a week to do the collieries down about Greymouth.

164. That is nineteen days for a distance of over a hundred miles?—Yes; that is the largest work of the whole lot, and there are two men to do it.

165. How long would it take a man to go from Greymouth to Taitapu and inspect the mine?—I daresay it would take him three days.

166. You have been there, have you not?—Yes.

167. How long did it take you?—It took me about three days from Reefton. It took me two days to Nelson. I am stating the outside as three days.

168. Did you do the trip from Nelson to Taitapu in a day?—Yes.

169. Your opinion is that the mines ought to be inspected once a month?—Yes; and I think the present Inspectors can do it.

170. You are not satisfied that the present inspection is satisfactory?—I am not.

171. What is the matter with it?—I think I have stated that before, but I will state it again. The matter with it is this: that in the first place I do not think the present Inspectors are suitable men for the position. In the next place they are not energetic enough, and there are some parts of the mines at Reefton that they have not been in for months.

172. You think it is the fault of the men and not the fault of the system?—I have not come here to find fault with the Inspectors, but you are forcing me to find fault with them.

173. You say you do not find fault with the men, and then you do find fault. I want to know whether you find fault with the men or the system?—There is no system. I do not know the system if there is one.