

160. That is the amount according to your test: it is no proof that it is being distributed throughout the whole of the mine?—The test is made in the different places, you know. That is the quantity produced by the fan whether the air is getting away or not.

161. I suppose you admit, with the other expert mining men, Mr. Fletcher, now, that safety-lamps are absolutely necessary for this mine, do you not?—No, I do not admit it, in view of possible legislation that is foreshadowed.

162. But you formed one of a deputation to oppose that particular Bill, which provided that safety-lamps should go into such mines?—Yes, I was on the deputation.

163. And this is the Bill of 1912 which was reported from the Goldfields and Mines Committee on the 17th October, 1912, and I think that after it had passed the Goldfields and Mines Committee a deputation came down to Wellington and that you were one of the deputationists?—I was a member of it.

164. Did the Bill go through after that?—No, it has not gone through yet.

165. Did it contain this provision: "No lamp or light shall be used other than a locked safety-lamp shall be allowed or used in any place in a mine in which there is likely to be any such quantity of inflammable gas as to render the use of naked lights dangerous . . ."? That is the Bill your deputation opposed?—Yes, that is the Bill. I think it is the same Bill which is before the House this year.

166. Were not you one of the deputation which went to Wellington to oppose that Bill?—I accompanied the deputation of coal-mine owners as a manager. I only opposed two clauses in that Bill.

167. Was the deputation got together to oppose this Bill?—Yes, right through.

168. And it never saw the light of day, or, at any rate, it did not reach the statute-book?—No.

169. *Mr. Tunks.*] In regard to the reporting of these burnings, Mr. Fletcher, we have had a great deal of talk about the accident to Conn. I think it has been made clear that that occurred in the Extended Mine?—Yes.

170. That accident was reported in 1912?—In March, 1912.

171. You stated simply that he was burned?—Yes.

172. Without particularizing whether it was caused by gas or otherwise?—Yes.

173. Was there any reason for that? Did you do it with the intention of holding anything back?—No.

174. Did you receive any inquiry at once as to whether it was gas or powder which caused the burn?—No, I do not remember whether I did or not.

175. May we take it that there was no attempt at holding anything back about the burning of Conn or Wilcox?—Yes; and that applies also to other cases.

176. Have you ever attempted to keep anything back from the Inspector in regard to anything that happens in the mine?—No, I tell him everything to the best of my knowledge.

177. It was stated that the brattice was found to be disarranged and there was some lack of ventilation: was there anything serious in that?—No, that happens every day in every coal-mine in New Zealand, Australia, and in the Old Country.

178. It was a trivial matter and was attended to?—Yes.

179. So that there was no necessity for you to solemnly sit down and write a letter to the Inspector of Mines to tell him that the brattice had become disarranged when five minutes' work would remove the trouble?—No.

180. In regard to watering, you said something about the method that was adopted. We have heard that it was only the middle of the road that was watered?—Yes.

181. Did you do anything or was anything done in regard to the dust that lay alongside the road?—It was worked into the centre and the road was kept sloppy.

182. So that what lay on the sides was drawn into the middle and got into the wet area?—Yes.

183. That was being regularly done?—Yes, regularly; men were kept for the purpose.

184. Was Ransom, although sixty years of age, fit for the work?—Yes.

185. And doubtless you could judge whether he did his work faithfully?—Yes.

186. Was any suggestion ever made that you should water the haulage-way?—No.

187. Or the old workings?—Not the old workings. It cannot be done in the old workings.

188. Mr. Molesworth, sen., in his evidence referred to some hot coal coming out of the mine?—Yes.

189. Did you know where that was coming from?—It may have been from the places on the south side—I forget.

190. What was the object of bringing up the heated material?—It was brought up for safety.

191. *Mr. Brown.*] To get rid of the menace?—Yes.

192. *Mr. Tunks.*] In regard to the question of gas in the old workings, we have had it in evidence that these old workings are return airways?—Yes, all return airways.

193. And what was the position in regard to the slope of the mine, the lie of the strata?—When travelling towards the shaft you are continually on the rise. The only dip of the seam is from the shaft to the north-west. Every bord-length we fall down feet until we come to the bottom.

194. What effect, if any, has that on the ventilation and the presence of gas?—We get what we call ascensional ventilation in its true state. That means that the continual rise from the lowest point of the mine to the upcast shaft is a help to the return air, and carries off the gases to the highest point, the air-shaft. That is the advantage.

195. The tendency of these gases is to rise?—Yes, travelling to the highest point.