

186. You are simply laying back on your oars to see the result of the petition?—There is nothing doing.

187. What was the amount of the daily output of the mine at the time the hands were taken off?—On the last day it was 125 tons.

188. But the average for some months before—for a month, what would be an average?—We were putting out some months before that 80, 90, and 100 tons.

189. Have you any of the returns with you?—No; but Mr. Binns would have the yearly returns.

190. Can you speak as to what the last yearly return showed?—I did not bring it.

191. Can you not speak from memory?—No.

192. Speaking roughly, how many tons were there for the year?—I think about 14,000 tons.

193. Can you say, from your own knowledge of the returns of the mine, whether it paid expenses for the last year, or whether there was a loss?—It was worked at a profit.

194. Do you know how much?—I cannot speak from memory.

195. When did you become a part owner?—In 1878.

196. You were a partner when the first year's returns were to hand, but you cannot speak roughly as to the amount of profit made?—No.

197. Did the question of profit or loss concern you?—Yes.

198. You cannot remember the amount of profit?—No.

199. Not roughly?—No.

200. Among whom were the profits divided?—Among the shareholders.

201. Who were the shareholders the first year: were they not Mr. Rich and yourself?—Yes, and some others.

202. How many do you think, speaking roughly?—Seven, I think.

203. Do you remember whether the second year you made any profit?—As nearly as I remember, the second year there was something over £2,000.

204. Divided among seven?—There was no division.

205. It was simply carried to the credit of the company?—Yes. The only division amongst the shareholders was a sum of £800. That was actually paid.

WEDNESDAY, 1ST OCTOBER, 1884.

Mr. JAMES LOUDON, examined on oath.

206. *Mr. Chapman.*] Mr. Loudon, what are you?—A colliery manager.

207. Where employed?—At the Walton Park, Green Island District.

208. The Walton Park Colliery is owned by a company carrying on business in Dunedin?—Yes.

209. How long have you been managing that colliery?—I have been carrying it on for about twenty years: eight years on my own behalf, and about eleven on behalf of the company.

210. Do you know the Shag Point Mine?—No; I never was there.

211. Do you know anything of the character of the strata there?—I have seen the sequence.

212. From plans?—Yes.

213. You do not know the actual character of the strata from examination?—No.

214. Have you had any experience in connection with standage water getting into a mine?—No, not to any extent; but I know the effects water has upon the strata.

215. Have you heard described the mode in which the seaward workings of the Shag Point Mine have been flooded with water?—Yes.

216. I ask you to assume that water has risen in the mine?—I am aware of such from newspaper report, nothing else.

217. From your knowledge of these matters, what do you consider would be the effect of water accumulating in a mine—upon the roof and floor?—It would dissolve the shales, and, in all likelihood, bring a creep from the workings. I may say that often moist air affects the shales and the walls. A trickle of water, or moist air alone, will cause, from the roof, shales to flake off and fall rather much, and in side walls it will cause it to bulge out; and a very slight stream on the floor, as I am too well aware, will cause it to heave.

218. You say that the effect of water is to dissolve the shales and cause a creep?—Yes; reduce it to not much better than clay puddle.

219. Will you tell the Committee what a creep is?—It is a subsidence caused through the settlement of portions of the coal remaining. This shale is rather a hard compact body whilst it is being cut, but immediately it is exposed to moisture it loses its strength and becomes not much better than puddle.

220. And what is the effect of keeping it dry after it has been cut?—If you keep it dry very little hurt can come over it.

221. Does it stand?—Yes; except, as I say, that moist air will affect it.

222. I need scarcely ask you your opinion, as an experienced man, whether you would fill a mine with water in order to keep the roof upstanding?—No; that would be the last thing to do, although it should cost nine-tenths of the profits of the concern. I would say keep it dry.

223. Do you know Mr. Binns?—Yes; well.

224. Do you know him as a gentleman of large experience in these matters?—I do not know anything about his experience. I have always found him a very amiable and agreeable gentleman.

225. In your own mine, do you find any great difficulty in keeping the roof up?—Yes; just now we have had a great deal of trouble. As a rule, to save coming in contact with the shales, we keep a portion of coal on the roof and also a portion of coal under foot, but, in driving, we cannot avoid sometimes cutting the floor of an undulating seam. That is always avoided, if possible. I always look on it as running a certain amount of risk in doing so. Just recently—the job is not completed yet—we have been driving, and it has given us a great deal of trouble, and has cost us £250 for timber alone; and, I may say, we are going to lose it after all just on account of salt-water, and