

255. There is a sand-bar; is it hard?—No.
256. It is not a good roof?—No.
257. Your experience is always to avoid a bad roof, I suppose?—Yes.
258. You see this plan, a portion of which is by Taylor [plan produced: *vide* end of paper.] Supposing this to be the working plan, looking at that, does that appear to be a correct mode of working?—To my mind there is any amount of coal left there.
259. Assuming that to be a copy of the actual working plan, made as the works went on advancing, do you think that that shows a proper working, leaving sufficient support of coal?—Yes.
260. I ask you to look at that [plan produced], and say whether, in your opinion, it is credible that the persons who were surveying from time to time, regularly employed by the company, should be so far out in their surveys as indicated by this?—The difference is terribly great. I should say that the man who made such a difference must surely have had some very strong motive for it.
261. Does it seem credible to you that competent surveyors, employed in a mine systematically for a course of years, should pervert surveys in that way?—No; the difference is so terribly great. In one place it shows plenty of coal left, and in the other there is not enough.
262. Can you credit an experienced mine manager perverting workings in the manner shown there, and having large capital invested in the mine?—No; I do not see what could induce a man to do it.
263. *Mr. Reid.*] Are you aware that Mr. Denniston made a plan of the Walton Park Mine?—Yes.
264. Are you aware that that plan had so many inaccuracies in it that it had to be afterwards altered?—Not so many inaccuracies; only one inaccuracy.
265. It shows it is not unusual to make mistakes in surveying a coal mine?—There was only one inaccuracy of which I am aware.
266. Look at that plan [Twining's]. Have you any knowledge of him as a surveyor: have you seen his work?—Yes.
267. Is he usually correct in his work?—Yes; his outside work is correct, but he does not detail the work as much as Denniston; that is to say, he does not give the inside work as well. It is done in a much simpler manner.
268. Is he a man whose word you could rely on as to the size of a pillar or bord on a special survey?—Yes; I would take his word most assuredly, if he said he measured it.
269. Where he shows inside or other work and certifies it, would you have any hesitation in accepting it as correct?—When he prepares a plan for us, there are many inequalities in the thickness of the pillars; instead of showing the inequalities he shows a direct line. But he is a most correct surveyor in showing the outside.
270. What he does show on a plan he shows correctly?—No; he does not show correctly when he makes a straight line, where there are irregularities.
271. From your experience and knowledge of him, would you take a plan as correct if signed and certified by him?—If he gave me to understand that he did it for a special purpose. He has plenty of ability as a surveyor.
272. You do not think, from your knowledge of him, that he would show a plan of that kind—the workings altogether different from the real state of the mine—merely for purposes of his own?—I think not.
273. Assuming this plan to be correct, and assuming yourself to be in the position of the Mining Inspector, would you have any hesitation in directing the mine to be closed?—I would not say I would have no hesitation, but I would have some fear.
274. For the safety of the men?—Yes.
275. *Mr. Chapman.*] Supposing for a moment you pronounced it unsafe and ordered the work to stop, would you fill it with water?—That would be the very last thing to do.
276. What would you do to uphold the roof here, supposing that the pillars were worn too thin?—It might have been the best plan to have packed it from outside, to have taken out the trees, and come back and allowed it to settle down on that pack; but at all events keep it dry.
277. Supposing you had discovered an actual error of 5ft. or 6ft. in the width of a bord shown in a field-book, should you consider that an accurate survey?—No; it would throw doubts on the whole surveys. And they do make mistakes sometimes, the best.

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Mr. R. B. DENNISTON, examined on oath.

278. *Mr. Chapman.*] What are you, Mr. Denniston?—Mining engineer and manufacturers' agent.
279. What experience of coal mines have you had in this colony?—Twenty-two years.
280. Do you know the principal mines in the colony?—I know them all.
281. How are you engaged just now?—As a mining engineer and manufacturers' agent.
282. Advising several companies?—Yes; the Kaitangata, Walton Park, Shag Point, and occasionally the Westport Coal and Coal Pit Heath Company.
283. I believe at one time you occupied an official position in this colony?—Yes; Coal-viewer under the Geological Department.
284. What were your duties?—To inspect all the collieries throughout the country, to make surveys, and to report generally to Dr. Hector.
285. Was there an Inspector of Mines at that time?—No; I filled that position as far as regards the Geological Department.
286. Do you know the Shag Point Mine?—I do.
287. Are you familiar with all the workings?—Yes.
288. When did you become acquainted with the seaward workings in the upper seam?—About June or July, 1883.