

from level, north side, south cuddy, taking a 3ft. 3in. rib of a pillar. Spoke to Mr. Williams about this, and he said he would see about it and stop it, as it was not done with his authority. Requested him not to rob any of the pillars at present."

490. Did you see Mr. Twining's plan after it was completed?—Yes.

491. Who was present with you besides Mr. Twining when he made the survey?—Mr. Taylor, the company's surveyor, and, during a portion of the time, Mr. Kenyon, the underground manager.

492. Was Mr. Taylor present the whole of the time?—I think so: I am not prepared to say exactly; think he was the greater part of the time; practically the whole of the time.

493. Did he take any notes or make use of any field-book?—He required permission to take notes. I believe he did take notes. I gave permission. There are copies.

494. Besides Taylor, who was there, or was there any one else?—Mr. Kenyon was there occasionally.

495. Who is he?—He is the underground manager.

496. Any one else?—The workmen employed.

497. In going round?—Yes; the workmen employed on the survey.

498. Have you seen Mr. Twining's plan since it was completed?—I have.

499. What is your opinion of that plan, as to its correctness or otherwise?—It tallies in several respects with independent measurements that I made myself. It also tallies in one point with a survey of a portion of the mine which I obtained from Mr. Taylor. The survey is dated December, 1882.

500. Does it, in your opinion, represent truthfully the state of the mine at the time the survey was made?—It does.

501. On what principle was the survey conducted: was the average width taken, and then run through; or were the wide places and the narrow measured with care?—Whenever there was any irregularity in the size of the bord it was taken off by offset, whether we went through broad or narrow. We endeavoured to take it off with great accuracy, as will be seen on the plan.

502. Then, if Mr. Denniston, sworn on this inquiry, states that the widest places were taken and run straight through, is that statement correct?—It is not correct; it is evident from the plans.

503. *Mr. Reid* (to Chairman).] That plan (Twining's) is not verified; but it will be verified by the next witness. The wide places are not shown all the way through on the plan; where the bords are narrow it is shown on the plan.

504. How many bords are shown: how many pillars?—In this portion of the mine there are ten bords shown: that is the south side, the extreme south side.

505. How many pillars?—The same number of pillars; a little to the north there are nine bords and nine pillars.

506. Is there any average of bords and pillars shown to the south?—I have taken the average, which is included in the report that has been printed. I have not a copy of it. I am referring to my report of the 26th May. The average of bords is given in that report: bords, 13·79ft.; pillars taken out, 10·296ft. average.

507. Looking at that plan, from your experience, do you consider that a safe mode of working that mine?—I consider it very unsafe.

508. Do you remember when that plan was first shown to you?—Towards the end of February, 1883.

509. Did you speak to Mr. Williams again about taking precautions in working the mine previously to your taking steps to close the mine, and, if so, when, after the 31st January or the 1st February, did you speak to Mr. Williams again as to taking precautions?—Yes.

510. When?—I think I spoke to him about it every time I was at the mine. I was there on the 1st February and the 2nd February. I have no note of it.

511. When did you take steps to close the mine, or speak to Mr. Williams about closing the mine?—On the 13th February I saw Mr. Williams at my office.

512. Did you speak to him about closing the mine?—Yes. Mr. Williams also proposed putting a flood-gate and the framework of a dam, in case it should be needed, between the shaft and the present workings. Mr. Williams expressed his willingness to do anything to meet my views. On that occasion it was agreed that a certain portion of the mine should be worked; that he should be careful in watching any weak point. Mr. Williams promised to be careful in putting in flood-gate framework or dam, in case it should be needed, between the shaft and the present workings.

513. When did you next visit the mine?—I became apprehensive that the precautions were not sufficient when Mr. Twining's survey was laid before me.

514. What did you do upon that?—On the 24th February I wrote to Mr. Williams.

515. Having seen Twining's survey, you wrote to Mr. Williams?—Yes; I wrote to him, giving him notice to close the submarine area. [Letter read: *vide* Appendix F.]

*The Chairman*: It might save printing, and the evidence be equally clear, if the questions were omitted, and the evidence should be taken as to the answer. There are upwards of fifty petitions to be disposed of.

*Mr. Reid*: I am quite willing that the questions should be omitted if the substance of them should be conveyed in the answers. I am desirous of doing anything that will shorten the inquiry.

516. Give us the date of that letter?—The 14th February. In that letter I recommended him to take certain precautions with reference to the closing of the mine. I considered that it was in imminent danger from the permeation of water from the sea. My grounds for closing the mine were these: I apprehended danger, and because I did not think there was sufficient cover. I also considered that primarily there had been too much coal taken out; and, worse than that, it had been taken out in an extremely irregular manner. If the same amount of coal had been taken out in a regular manner it might have been safe; but, as shown by the plan, it was taken out in patches, which has a great tendency to break the roof. Considerable falls had already occurred. I considered that, if the mine were to be allowed to go on, a very large number of lives would probably