

send the telegram?—I am not certain what actually induced me: it was from a question I had been asked by a collier on the West Coast, as to the safety of the Shag Point Mine.

535. Was that the man who said he heard the sea?—No; I do not know that it was.

536. Did you hear such reports?—No; I do not attach any importance to such reports. I do not think it was possible.

537. Did you have any conversation with any one in consequence of which you sent this telegram?—I had a conversation with Mr. Denniston before that time.

538. Did you give Mr. Williams the source of your information?—I do not think so. I could not give them to him; I did not know the man's name at this date.

539. Do you remember a letter from Mr. Maitland, Commissioner of Crown Lands, in which he refers to "rumours and reports"?—Yes. [Portion of letter read.]

540. Was that upon any representation of yours?—It was.

541. Was it your representation to Mr. Maitland?—Yes; to the Government.

542. In what way?—He is Commissioner of Crown Lands.

543. So that in the report you speak of Mr. Maitland refers to these "rumours and reports"?—No.

544. What does he refer to?—He refers to a conversation I had with him in his office on the 27th January, 1884.

545. What was that conversation?—It was that the mine was unsafe.

546. You told him so?—That that was my opinion, and that I would have to investigate.

547. You told Mr. Maitland that?—Yes.

548. Did you mention it to Mr. Williams?—I wrote to Mr. Maitland. I am not aware when that letter came, to my knowledge.

549. Did you inform Mr. Williams? I did not; I did not write to him.

550. You went to the colliery on the 24th January; on the 31st you said something about 6ft. pillars: what was it you said to Mr. Williams?—I asked him if 6ft. pillars were sufficient for submarine mining. It was on what had been ascertained by me.

551. Do I understand you to say that it was when looking at a plan?—No.

552. Do I understand you to say, in reference to the 31st January, that you showed him a plan?—No; I am not aware. I measured the pillars and noted them to be 6ft. thick.

553. Where?—I will show it to you on the plan.

554. What plan is that you have there?—It is a plan copied from the Shag Point Company's workings. This plan may not fix the particular pillar; there is a slight discrepancy; but there is a pillar which I measured.

555. To what length does it run?—To the bolt-hole.

556. Did you make all your measurements to the bolt-hole?—Yes; I had no means of making any other.

557. If the pillar happened to run, then, to the bolt-hole only for a yard or a few feet, that was all you could ascertain?—No; I should provide in a case of that kind by taking a line and marking it off.

558. All the falls were marked off in February, 1883?—I find on Mr. Twining's plan the fall is noted 8 and 9.

559. There is a fall there on the extreme north: did you make any measurement for that?—No; but I had noted that a good deal of ground had fallen in that part of the mine.

560. Is that a portion of the mine where the seam runs very thin?—They do now.

561. How came Mr. Twining to be employed?—He was engaged.

562. By whom?—By me, acting under the instructions of the Government.

563. Did the General Government direct you to him in particular?—No; they did not.

564. What did they direct you to do?—They authorized me to employ a surveyor, and I chose Mr. Twining.

565. Where did you find Mr. Twining: where was he?—At his house; where his office is, in Great King Street, Dunedin.

566. Do you know what is his occupation?—He was a practising mining engineer.

567. Was he in the employ of any company?—I cannot say. He was in general practice as a mining engineer; he might have been in twenty companies; he is a mining surveyor and engineer.

568. Do you recollect Mr. Taylor and Mr. Kenyon complaining of erroneous measurements?—I do.

569. Is Mr. Williams right in saying that your attention was called to a discrepancy of some 5ft. or 6ft. Yes; it was not a discrepancy on the plan, it was a discrepancy in an imaginary plan we had.

570. Was it a discrepancy in the field-book?—Yes.

571. Now, I understand you to say, Mr. Binns, that when you got Mr. Twining's plan you determined that the mine was unsafe?—I believe that was the final thing that concluded my opinion.

572. You then determined to write a letter, which, I understand you to say, you wrote on the same day?—I am not aware that I said I wrote a letter on the same day.

573. You told us that at the end of February you received Mr. Twining's plan?—Yes.

574. On the 24th February you gave directions for the closing of the mine?—Yes.

575. Now, what did you have from Mr. Twining, a plan or a tracing?—I never had a tracing from Mr. Twining.

576. Was it the actual plan laid before you?—Yes.

577. You have had it ever since?—Yes; in my possession.

578. Did you forward a copy of the plan to Mr. Williams?—No, I did not.

579. Did it not occur to you that, in view of the very serious and extreme step you were taking, that it would have been prudent to forward a copy of the plan?—Not when Mr. Taylor had notes.