

621. You were closing the mine some months before?—The submarine workings—a small portion of 10 acres out of 190 acres in the lease.

622. Did you not know that your action involved the closing of the whole of the existing works?—No; it did not involve the whole of the existing works.

623. How could it have been avoided?—It was arranged at the time that the pumping was to be carried on.

624. That the pumping was to be carried on?—Yes. I can show you how it was considered. [Explanation given on plan.]

625. You arranged it in your own mind so as to allow it to come to a certain level only?—[Report to Commissioner of Crown Lands part read.] There is a dip shown in one place of 1 in 4. The pressure of water would be 100lb. to the square inch if allowed to rise to the sea-level in the mine. As stated in the report, if allowed to rise only to the lower level it would be 33lb.

626. You would let it rise to the point you have indicated on the plan, and then you would have relied on pumping operations to keep the water in check?—Yes.

627. Suppose the effect of letting the water in were to destroy the roof as well as bring the sea in, then all your pumping operations would be wasted?—If the sea came in all the pumping operations would be wasted.

627A. Then, the whole of this final arrangement of yours depended on the efficacy of your remedial measures?—I do not exactly understand you.

628. If the effect of letting in the water was, so far as you were concerned, to bring about a dissolution of the roof, ultimately letting the sea in, then you could not carry out your idea of checking the water at the point you indicate by pumping?—If the sea came in there it would be of no use to pump.

629. If the evidence adduced is correct, that the effect of letting in the water at all would be to dissolve the roof so as ultimately to let in the sea, then you would not rely on the possibility of keeping it in check?—No.

630. Then you did not contemplate that the effect of letting in the water would be to destroy the roof?—Yes; I contemplated that to a certain extent. I considered that the general effect of letting in the water would be to assist in sustaining the roof; letting the water in would have kept the roof up by the support it would give.

631. What you mean is, by the static effect of the water?—Yes.

632. But that leaves out the question of the dissolution of strata?—I am not aware there is such a thing as the dissolution of strata.

633. *Mr. Macandrew.* Disintegration of strata?—Strata disintegrates with air.

634. *Mr. Chapman.* Do you consider that it would disintegrate, more or less, with water?—Very little more, so long as the water was kept on it.

635. It was on that assumption you proceeded, then, in letting in the water?—Yes.

636. Did you refer at the time to any authority on the subject: did you claim the advice of the department here?—I did not claim the advice of the department here at the time.

637. You acted on your own judgment solely on this matter?—I consulted Dr. Hector, and asked him if he had any authority on submarine mining. I sent to different parts of the world for information on submarine mining, which is very rare, at shallow depths; therefore extra care was required. I did not consult any one; I had no one to consult.

638. Did you telegraph to Dr. Hector for authorities?—Yes.

639. But you did not advise with the department so as to relieve you of responsibility?—I reported to the Government immediately when it was arranged; on that they could have acted: I closed the place and reported: that was all I had to do.

640. I suppose you would have been glad to have been relieved of some portion of your responsibility?—I would always have been glad to have been relieved of the responsibility.

641. Now, as a matter of fact, when did the sea come in?—I am not aware: it came in shortly before the 11th of February.

642. In what year?—1884.

642A. Do you know that it has come in: have you satisfied yourself on that subject?—Yes.

643. We will go back to the conversation with Mr. Rich on the 19th of March; Mr. Williams was present, or it was a conversation with Mr. Williams, Mr. Rich being present; was it a long conversation?—It was a very long conversation; we went into everything as closely as we could possibly do.

644. Did Mr. Rich urge his views as to the effect of letting in the water?—I am not aware that he did.

645. Did he not protest to the effect that it was a most severe measure to adopt?—No; I have no note of it.

646. You say it was a long conversation, and yet you have no notes of it?—I have a note of the general gist of the conversation. [Reads.] “Mr. Williams proposes the working out of the block of coal 2½ chains above the present opening.”

647. Is that the whole of the note?—Yes; that is the whole of the note.

648. You agreed to allow a month to follow?—Yes; on the 20th of March I reported to the Commissioner of Crown Lands; it was agreed upon as the result of the conversation; it is therefore but shortly indicated in that sense.

649. Did you insist that Mr. Rich should give in?—That would be a short way of putting it; it was open to him to have protested if he thought proper; I reported to the Commissioner of Crown Lands because he was my superior officer; he, not I, was the representative of the Crown.

650. Was that the way that he gave in?—He might have protested.

651. Did he at last direct Mr. Williams to give in?—I do not recollect.

652. You saw Mr. Williams?—I do not remember.

653. There was no agreement on the subject, except in the sense that your authority was sub-