

690. Now, in your report you have referred to falls: in what part of the mine do you particularly refer to falls?—In which report?

691. In your chief report—the long one?—The falls were distributed over the mine.

692. In what part were they, principally?—The worst falls were on the north side, but there were many falls.

693. The worst falls were on the north side: are they approximately represented by the shading on that plan?—I am not aware what that plan is. They are approximately represented on Mr. Twining's plan.

694. Did you go through the mine where those falls were?—No; I could not; it was not safe.

695. Do you know the thickness of the seam where those falls were?—Between 3ft. or 4ft., I think.

696. Did you examine the falls in other parts of the mine?—I did.

697. Do you remember asking Mr. Williams to watch the falls?—Yes.

698. When was that?—I am not aware.

699. Can you give us any idea?—It was in the early part of February, 1883.

700. And did you obtain a report from him later in the same year?—I think I did.

701. Did he not inform you that nothing, or scarcely anything, had fallen since?—I have a recollection of something of that sort in one of his reports. I cannot tell you the exact date of the report; I might find it.

702. Was it a written report you had from him?—I think so.

703. Well, was not that the purport of his report?—I do not find such a report, Mr. Chapman.

704. Very well, then, probably it was a verbal report, was it not?—Probably it was.

705. Do you remember what he told you after you had told him to watch the falls: if you do not remember you can say so, Mr. Binns, and we can pass on?—I do not think I do remember. Tell me on what dates.

706. I have very few questions further to ask you. With reference to your views on the subject of letting water in the mine, you said it was very difficult to find authorities on the subject, and I believe you said you telegraphed to Dr. Hector on the subject of submarine mining?—Yes.

707. Have you endeavoured since to further familiarize yourself with the subject?—I have.

708. Have you consulted authorities on the subject of letting water into mines as a preservative or preventive measure?—Yes; I have.

709. On the subject of keeping water in mines with a view of upholding roofs?—Yes.

710. Have you consulted engineering authorities in this country on the subject?—I have.

711. With reference to Shag Point shales?—With reference to the subject in general.

712. May I ask whom you have consulted?—I have consulted Mr. Bishop, and I have consulted Mr. Harrison, of Greymouth.

713. Yes; are they witnesses?—They were recommended by me as witnesses. I have also consulted Mr. Blackett, Mr. Blair, and Mr. O'Connor.

714. Have you consulted any other mining engineers?—No.

715. Have you consulted any persons who are familiar with the subject of coal mines?—Yes; I have stated their names.

716. Yes; but other than those you have mentioned?—No; I do not think I have.

717. *Mr. Macandrew.*] Have you consulted Mr. Denniston?—I am so familiar with Mr. Denniston's opinion that it was not necessary.

718. *Mr. Chapman.*] You have made some reference in your correspondence, Mr. Binns, to a prosecution in connection with the Shag Point Mine?—Yes; I have.

719. When was that?—I think on the 25th and 28th July, 1883.

720. Some months after you had ordered the closing of the upper working?—Yes.

721. Now, what was the subject of that prosecution?—Deficient ventilation.

722. You laid an information, or two informations, against Mr. Williams, did you not?—I did.

723. And that was tried before Mr. Robinson, at Palmerston, and the trial lasted two days?—Yes; it occupied the Court during two days.

724. You called a large number of men from the mine, did you not, on this subject of ventilation?—Yes.

725. And you called some experts; I think Mr. Denniston gave evidence?—Yes.

726. You did not call him, did you?—No.

727. You are not one of his believers, are you: you do not quite agree with Mr. Denniston?—No.

728. Your views on the subject of ventilation and Mr. Denniston's views came into conflict on that occasion, did they not?—No; Mr. Denniston was not down at the time I was.

729. No; but, on the question of the feasibility of ventilating that mine in certain ways, your views came into conflict with those of Mr. Denniston and others, did they not?—He was on the other side.

730. You called some of the coal-miners who were themselves in the mine: did they bear out your case?—The case was dismissed, if that is what you mean.

731. Did the evidence bear it out?—I consider that it did. I consider it was a very good case.

732. But the case was dismissed?—Yes; I have the Magistrate's remarks on the case here. The Magistrate said it was a good case.

733. But he dismissed it?—Yes.

734. Now, there is one thing I omitted: you said you asked Mr. Williams some question about 6ft. pillars: do you mean to tell this Committee that Mr. Williams stated to you in general terms that he considered 6ft. pillars sufficient for the support of a mine?—I asked him if he considered 6ft. pillars sufficient in submarine mining, and he said Yes.

735. You called his attention to a particular pillar, which you referred to as a 6ft. pillar, did you not?—Yes.