

in your action as Inspector of Mines, did it not occur to you to think that it would have been prudent to take counsel with other professional men before issuing such an order?—There is nothing would have delighted me more than to take counsel with any one, but I had no one to take counsel with; I felt it at the time; I was very sorry I had no one to take counsel with.

765. You state that you would have been delighted to take the counsel of others, and to have shared the responsibility with them: did you advise the Minister of Mines not to accede to Mr. Rich's request that some one else should be referred to?—Not for a moment.

766. Had it been referred to you, you would have advised that a commission should be granted?—Most strongly.

767. But it was never referred to you?—Never.

768. *Mr. Cowan.*] You told us yesterday that, on one occasion when you were in this mine, you were alarmed by what you called "the weighting of the coal"?—Yes.

769. That was brought about by the subsidence of the roof?—It is a noise caused by the weighting of the roof. The roof may not be actually subsiding, but it is the prime mover of it, the weight of the roof.

770. You were alarmed at the frequency of these sounds?—We retired from the place.

771. Is it a usual occurrence in a coal-mine?—Not if it is properly worked.

772. On that occasion, did you consider that your life was in danger if you remained in the position in which you were?—I considered it would be prudent to move. I did not consider that my life was in immediate danger, but I considered it prudent to move to a more sheltered place.

773. *Mr. McKenzie.*] You said, in reply to Mr. Macandrew a few minutes ago, that at the time you gave authority to close this mine you could not get any professional advice?—Mr. McKenzie, if you will allow me to say so, a Government official has to undertake his duty; if he were to ask for some one else to undertake that duty he would be stepped upon by the Government. When I am told to undertake a duty I have to do it.

774. That is not an answer to my question?—I am very sorry; I intended it to be so.

775. You stated that you could not get a professional man to consult with?—I had nobody to consult with.

776. How is it you have discovered some one since this petition began?—I asked them as witnesses.

777. Why did you not ask them before?—It would not do for me to disclose the affairs of a mine to any outside individual. I could not think of doing it.

778. Could you not have put a supposititious case to any of these gentlemen?—No; they would have known in a minute; they would have known at once to what mine I referred.

779. I think you gave it in evidence, or it came out in the evidence of some other witness here, that you consulted Dr. Hector, did you not?—I asked him for authorities. I may say that was the only step I took to consult Dr. Hector. I have the telegram here.

780. *Hon. Mr. Rolleston.*] Is it a usual thing in the department for an inspector to apply for extra assistance?—I think it is an unheard-of thing; I never heard of it; I never dared to do it.

781. Did you feel any doubt about the propriety of the course you were taking?—No; I did not after I had considered it.

782. Have you any reason to suppose that the department would not have given you assistance if you had asked for it?—No; I have not.

783. Did the question that lives were in danger influence you?—Entirely.

784. And did you not report to the department that lives were in danger?—Yes; I think I did.

785. And the department had before it information which showed that the matter was one which required decisive and prompt action?—Yes.

786. *The Chairman.*] What evidence have you that the water which did come into the mine eventually was salt?—I tasted it.

787. *Mr. McKenzie.*] What date was that?—February, 1884.

788. *Hon. Mr. Rolleston.*] Did not a considerable time elapse between your order and any written objection being received?—Yes.

789. And before any application was made to the Government the water had been accumulating a considerable time?—Yes; I believe so.

790. *Mr. McKenzie.*] Was this case at Palmerston before or after the closing?—It was before the final closing.

791. *Hon. Mr. Stout.*] What was the date?—The 25th and 28th July, 1883, I think.

792. Let me understand, because I have not been here before. Perhaps you have given the evidence before, but I have not heard the evidence. I understand you examined the mine?—Yes, I did.

793. You gave certain directions, and then you brought the matter before the Court for non-compliance with your directions: was that the reason?—I had had occasion to note twenty times during two and a half years that the ventilation was bad. I had spoken to Mr. Williams previously, and he had told the men, but this time he said it was quite good. There was no course open to me but to try and prove that it was bad, as I considered it to be bad.

794. The question that came before the Court was simply whether there were sufficient ventilating shafts, I suppose?—No; whether there was sufficient ventilation in one portion of the mine.

795. It was decided that there was?—Yes.

796. That was in July, 1883, and, from what I understand, the question of closing the mine at that time did not arise?—No.

797. Now, when did you first consider about closing the mine?—Do you mean the submarine mine?

798. Yes?—That was closed by me in February, 1883, before the prosecution.

799. When was the final closing of the mine?—On the 11th February, 1884.