

*Mr. Macandrew* : There is a great deal of force in what *Mr. Reid* has said ; there must be some finality to the matter. At the same time, we are going into the case to get at the truth, and, as *Mr. Brydon* is here, I should be inclined to hear what he has to say.

*Mr. THOMAS BRYDONE*, examined on oath.

1044. *Mr. Chapman.*] I believe you are now chairman of directors of the Kaitangata Coal Company?—I am.

1045. Have you had anything to do with coal-mining practically?—I have had some experience at Home.

1046. Do you know *Mr. Twining*?—Yes.

1047. He was employed by your company?—Yes.

1048. Is he now in your employ?—No.

1049. Will you tell the Committee generally what reliance you would place on his surveys, and whether you have any grounds for casting a doubt on them?—*Mr. Twining* was what was termed spacing engineer of the mine, and was expected to visit the mine regularly once a fortnight, or once a month at the least, and to report. We began to discover that he was careless in his reports and in his examination of the mine, and we consequently lost confidence in him, and about a year ago we dispensed with his services as consulting engineer, and appointed another man. When the new engineer went to examine the mine he made some measurements and surveys, and corrected some that had been made by *Mr. Twining*. This was *Mr. Denniston*, whom we employ at present.

1050. *Mr. Reid.*] I understand that you have had no practical experience in surveying?—No.

1051. Your knowledge as to the incorrectness of the survey was arrived at from what you have seen of the plans corrected, and from what you were informed by *Mr. Denniston*?—Yes.

1052. *Mr. Chapman.*] Did *Mr. Twining* retain your confidence as a surveyor?—No.

1053. *Mr. Reid.*] You discovered that he was careless as consulting engineer. Have you any reason to believe that, if *Mr. Twining* was sworn before the Committee to give evidence as to the measurements on the plan, he would willingly make incorrect statements?—I do not think he would.

1054. Has *Mr. Denniston* your confidence still?—Yes ; he is still in our employment.

1055. *The Chairman.*] Of your own knowledge, did you find any of the surveys incorrect?—No ; I am not an engineer.

1056. Have any been pointed out to you as incorrect?—I have only seen them as corrected.

1057. *Mr. Macandrew.*] You have seen the discrepancies on the plan?—Yes.

*Mr. BINNS*, recalled.

1058. *Mr. Reid.*] The small tracing marked A2 was made by you?—It was compared by me with *Mr. Taylor's* plan.

1059. Where?—At Shag Point.

1060. Are you prepared to swear that it is a correct copy of the section of the plan it purports to be?—Yes ; it was taken by me from a small section of a plan prepared by *Mr. Taylor*.

1061. Do you know the date?—December, 1882 ; it is a portion of the mine that subsequently fell so largely.

1062. *Mr. Chapman.*] You say it was taken from a section of a plan?—It was taken from a plan of a section of the mine.

1063. Does it embrace all you saw?—I am not certain.

1064. It was not taken from a plan of the mine, but from a small piece of it you saw in the office?—Yes ; from a special survey.

1065. Was it taken from a piece of the plan that this tracing (*Bishop and Taylor's*) was taken from, or from another?—No ; not from the same as that one.

*Mr. WILLIAMS*, examined.

1066. *The Chairman.*] Do you put in this letter (marked AB) as part of your statement?—I do.

1067. *Mr. Reid.*] I understood you to say, in your examination in chief, that, when *Mr. Binns* proposed to close the mine and allow it to fill with water, you made strong objections to that course?—Yes.

1068. Verbal objections?—Yes.

1069. That was in March, 1883, was it not?—No ; it was before the letter of the 14th February.

1070. Then, it was subsequent to this date that you, on more than one occasion, spoke to *Mr. Binns* about it being inadvisable to allow the water into the mine?—It was in March ; and the time that I again objected was at the meeting with *Mr. Rich*. I objected all along to the folly of letting in the water.

1071. Did you ever communicate in writing with him on the folly of allowing the water to accumulate?—No.

1072. Did you ever forward any objection to *Mr. Maitland*, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, or the Government, against letting the water into the mine?—I wrote a letter to *Mr. Maitland* ; the letter has been put in.

1073. That was in June or July, was it not?—No ; it was written when the communication came that *Mr. Binns* had been appointed to inspect the mine.

1074. But that letter makes no remarks on the danger of allowing the water to accumulate?—*Mr. Binns* had not then forced the water in, but was only talking about it.

1075. When did you first object to the course of letting the water in?—My letter to *Mr. Maitland* was on the appointment of *Mr. Binns*. *Mr. Maitland* wrote to me about the reports of the mine not being safe, and I wrote, in reply, complaining that the matter had not been communicated to me first.