

1403. *Mr. Rolleston.*] Under the Regulation of Mines Act, if any owner of a mine objects to an order, a notice has to be given within fourteen days. Would the same purpose be answered by giving an inquiry three months afterwards, when the water had accumulated in the mine: would there be the same possibility of inquiring?—No; the difference between three months and fourteen days would produce a material difference and prevent a satisfactory inquiry.

1404. Then, the course taken by the owners of the mine was not parallel to the course that would have been adopted had the mine been under the regulation of Mines Act?—I should say not.

1405. *Mr. Smith.*] Has Mr. Binns ever been employed in your department?—Yes.

1406. In what capacity?—As an irregularly appointed Inspector of Mines, prior to the formation of the Mines Department. After the formation of the department the Act was brought into force.

1407. Was he appointed to his present position on your recommendation?—I do not remember whether I was consulted as to his being transferred to the Mines Department.

1408. *Mr. Macandrew.*] He was transferred as a matter of course?—Yes.

1409. *Mr. Reid.*] With such a cover as has been described, do you think, as an expert, that the fact of allowing water to accumulate gradually in the mine would induce a fracture of the roof?—No; it would not have any effect in producing it.

1410. What would be more likely to do so in this mine?—Excavation of coal and consequent weakening of the support along lines that in themselves are naturally weak, and especially the removal of coal in excess in the neighbourhood of the shaft.

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Letter from Mr. W. H. WILLIAMS to COMMITTEE.

SIR,—

Wellington, 6th October, 1884.

As I do not feel myself able to stand much questioning before your Committee, I would respectfully ask that the following letter and report attached should be received as evidence and printed. I am willing to be cross-examined by Mr. Binns, if necessary.

In the latter part of 1881 Mr. Twining made a very careful inspection of the Shag Point submarine workings, in the interests of the Kaitangata Company, between which company and ours negotiations were being made either for amalgamation or to buy from us, our mine being valued at £30,000. Mr. Allan Holmes, a Kaitangata director, had visited and reported very favourably on our mine, and Mr. Twining's report was to conclude the matter as far as inspection went.

He went through the whole of the mine with me, and the submarine workings. Made measurements in my presence of various headings—width of bords, pillars, &c., and, after looking at our working plans, went again into the submarine area to make a perfectly independent inspection.

He made a very favourable report on the works, and his estimate as to the quantity of coal to be opened considerably exceeded mine, his inspection lasting over some three days.

Nearly the whole of the south side which he then inspected was surveyed by Mr. Bishop, and has stood as he then saw it, and nothing has been altered by taking out coal until he came again some fifteen months later, when he made the survey for Mr. Binns. The same applies to Mr. Bishop's survey on the north side.

During Twining's survey, Mr. Taylor, our surveyor, who was with him, warned me as to the incorrectness of the measurements he was making.

I may now state positively that during the whole of the time from his first report up to his survey for the Government no change in the plan of the workings had been made; but that all my anticipations were in opening up such a field of coal to the seaward that would last us for ten to fifteen years, without any more expense than actually opening out the working-places, as all my necessary and expensive plant was in course of erection, and would have enabled me to produce 500 tons per day, if required. It is, therefore, manifestly absurd to suppose that I should have had my submarine workings in such a condition as represented by Twining's survey.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman of the Waste Lands Committee,  
House of Representatives, Wellington.

W. H. WILLIAMS,  
Manager.