

workings; that upon these grounds, if unsafe, I agree with the Inspector in his action. Such being done, the full exercise of his duties being carried out allows of him having no further say as regards these workings.

The after action the Inspector apparently took of issuing orders for the mine to be flooded with water (it is not intended by the reading of the clause referred to in report that I in any way "embrace" or agree with such an action, which may be seen from the general tenor of the report, it being against water being allowed to accumulate in the workings), I could not under any circumstances agree with Inspector Binns's action, knowing he is incompetent to judge practically of such matters as to effect, &c. While from my own knowledge, considering the nature of the measures overhead to surface being shales and sandstones, their structure in the mass being that, when kept free from standage water in underground workings, they afford a good and substantial support, but from accumulative water in workings they swell and act detrimental to the upkeep of subterraneous workings, and somewhat very detrimental, in the case of the Shag Point submarine workings, by swelling the shales, eating the foot from under the pillars left for support, saturating the shales overhead, and necessarily causing a loosening of the strata and weighting of the overhead measures. Such action, taken to the instruction of Inspector Binns, has evidently been the means (cause) of the inroad of sea water to Shag Point workings, while otherwise, if such an excess of duty had not been resorted to by Inspector Binns, those workings would no doubt be in a state of preservation at the present time, and afforded access for others to judge of the state of the lower parts of these workings.

In conclusion, I may say that all practical men I have conversed with upon the action taken (and have no doubt any other practical men, should matters be properly represented to them, likewise other Government Inspectors) could not do otherwise than disagree with Inspector Binns in what appears his arbitrary exercise of his theoretical ideas, resulting in such a loss of property to your company.

I have, &c.,

The General Manager of the Shag Point Coal Company.

R. B. DENNISTON.

Mr. G. J. BINNS to the UNDER-SECRETARY of MINES.

(Telegram.)

Dunedin, 13th February, 1884.

*Re* Shag Point Colliery. The mine is not closed by me but the ocean, which has broken into the upper seam, and is rising gradually to fill the old workings in this seam. This will leave only seventy feet of measures for the protection of the lower or shaft workings, which is obviously insufficient, and I have written Mr. Williams as follows: "I therefore regret that, in my opinion, there is no other course open than to withdraw the whole of the workmen from the pit:" thus leaving ample room for him to object to my opinion. I have no power to arbitrarily close the mine, and it is quite open to the owners to proceed to arbitration as provided by section 19 of the regulations of Mines Act. Indeed, I have not even given the statutory notice, especially as Mr. Rich appeared as apprehensive of danger as myself. The water is salt, is rising much more rapidly than before, and there are said to be a number of fissures recently open on the beach between low- and high-water-marks. A number of men withdrew from the pit on Monday last, as salt water was descending the shaft, and they were frightened of losing their lives. They gave in their notices rather than work there. Grossly inaccurate and damaging statements have appeared in the local Press, and I am waiting for Ministerial authority to contradict them officially. Any further information required can be sent. A report was posted yesterday.

G. J. BINNS,

Inspector of Mines.

Mr. G. J. BINNS to the UNDER-SECRETARY of MINES.

(Telegram.)

Dunedin, 14th February, 1884.

From information received, I fancy that Mr. Rich will rely on portion of Denniston's report relative to inadvisability of allowing subaqueous workings to fill with water. If you will read that report entirely you will see that Denniston, in the last three paragraphs, upholds my action, if Twining's plan is correct, which it is.

G. J. BINNS,

Inspector of Mines.