

Tennent came several times, but on the occasion I think you refer to I was working in the Bridge Mine.

5. What was the state of the ventilation in the mine when you were working there?—I think she was the worst-ventilated mine I ever worked in.

6. About January, 1899, what was the state of the ventilation in the mine?—I think I was working in the east dip during part of that year. The ventilation was very bad.

7. How long did you work there?—I worked a quarter in the east dip.

8. And during all that time was the ventilation bad?—Yes. I was the first to take the pillars out when they started in that district.

9. Did you make any complaint about the ventilation?—Yes. On the second day I went to work two men were absent from work on account of the bad air. Mr. Marshall came to the place, and, it being so near to my place, I heard the conversation that took place between him and the men at work. He told them that he would not stand men lying off work. They said that the air was too bad to continue working in, and they mentioned the complaints of their mates, who said that they would not be at work on account of what they had suffered the day before. Mr. Marshall then came to my place. I was president of the union at the time. I told him that if we were not allowed to work under those circumstances there would be no alternative but to knock off, and that they would have to get some mechanical means of ventilation. Mr. Marshall said he had nothing to do with that. He said we knew where to go, and might take the matter to the union if we were dissatisfied. When working at our faces it was very rare that we could work more than an hour at a time without having to move out to where the air passed by. On one occasion I knew a man named Curtis laid by the side of the road half a day and unable to get out of the mine until half-past 4 on account of the bad air. This district, while they were taking out the solid ground, had mechanical means of ventilation—ventilation by a fan. When they commenced to extract the pillars in the back heading the return air-course had collapsed. In a conversation with the deputy concerning the ventilation on one occasion, I told him that it would be advisable to put in a little air; that it would not cost much—about £3. He said he had mentioned it to Mr. Broome, but could not get it done.

10. *The Chairman.*] Who was the deputy?—Mr. Marshall. After working in the east dip I worked in the Bridge section. The ventilation which has been spoken of by Mr. Tate and Mr. McGill is running parallel with the cliffs from daylight. It was driven in 3 chains. Then they turned a little to right angles and ventilated it to a chain and a half, which brought it out to daylight again. There was no return of any kind before that was put through.

11. How long do you suppose they were working there before they got to daylight?—I could not exactly say; it was put through before I was working in the Bridge district. I had to pass through this place to my work. The main drive continued a chain and a half, and then the heading took a fresh name, and became the main bridge heading, turning square on to the left. That heading was driven up 4 chains and had no return airway. It was bratticed, and the outlet from the bridge heading faced to that last outlet to the creek. That was the return, and the brattice was put up in such a poor way, and being only natural means of ventilation, that it was of no service.

12. *Mr. Cottrell.*] Did you not make a complaint to Wellington through your union?—Yes.

13. Were you discharged?—Yes.

14. About what date?—Two days before Mr. Beirne—on the Saturday.

15. You had made a complaint?—We lodged our complaint with the Mines Department.

16. Did you not lodge your complaint then?—Yes, in January.

17. Had the management said anything to you about discharging you up to that time?—No.

A note on my dismissal from Mr. Broome was to this effect: that I interfered very much with him in carrying out the work of the mine to the best advantage.

18. Did Mr. Tennent ask you if it was your signature on the document?—Mr. Tennent has never spoken to me in my life.

19. In consequence of that letter of dismissal you lost your employment?—Yes.

20. Have you been able to get any employment since?—Yes.

21. You are one of the partners in the Mokihinui Mine?—Yes. But I could not get any employment before. I only asked the Denniston people for employment, but they refused to find it for me. Since then I have never been in a position to leave the district.

22. *The Chairman.*] Did the Denniston people tell you why they would not give you employment?—No.

23. *Mr. Cottrell.*] Is there any other statement you wish to make? Did you bring any of your complaints before Mr. Tennent?—After what Mr. Marshall had said to me and Mr. Pratt re getting letters from headquarters, I could not send any complaints to Mr. Tennent. I dare not trust him.

24. Can you give any reason why you could not trust him?—Because it might have been true what Mr. Marshall had said. I thought it would be better to take the benefit of the doubt.

25. Do you think that Mr. Tennent knew that the mine was badly ventilated?—I fail to see how he could have known otherwise. I have known him to visit the Bridge district on two occasions in one week during the time the ventilation was at its worst. After I was discharged the fan was erected in the Bridge district, I was told, and the air was very much improved at the latter end up to the time the mine shut down.

26. Up to March, 1899, there was no fan used, and the ventilation was bad?—There were only natural means of ventilation in Bridge Mine up to my getting discharged. They had a fan lying idle, but for some cause or other they would not erect it. It could have been erected at very small cost.

27. *Mr. Harden.*] You say you have nothing to do with Mr. Beirne's complaint?—Yes.