

ROBERT TENNENT, Inspector of Mines, re-examined.

1. *Mr. Harden.*] When did you first inspect the mines at Denniston?—In July, 1897.
2. At what intervals after that did you generally inspect the mines here?—Every two or three months.
3. How did you find the ventilation of the mines, on the whole?—Generally, good.
4. Were there any particular instances where you did not find it good?—I have seen an odd place sometimes not so good.
5. Did you take any steps in the matter?—Yes; sometimes brattice would be wanted, which would be done at once.
6. Did you have any complaints from any of the miners?—Never a complaint.
7. Was your attention ever drawn to the fact that a man, or men, had fainted on account of the bad air?—Yes, I was told on one occasion.
8. What occasion was that?—At Ironbridge, in the Kiwi district.
9. Were you told who it was?—I cannot remember his name. He was an extra machine-man.
10. Did you inspect the place?—Yes.
11. How did you find it?—It was right enough when I was there. It was 11 o'clock at night I met the man in the mine. I made it my duty to do so.
12. The next charge against you is that you shirked your duty by allowing inexperienced persons, with a boy or youth under their control, to work in the mine. Have you ever found an inexperienced man to have charge of a coal-face at any of the machine-places?—I have met machine-men who have not been brought up to coal-mining all their lifetime. Sometimes you get a quartz-miner.
13. From the nature of the work, do you think a quartz-miner is capable of taking charge of a place?—The principal work is the spragging of the coal.
14. Which class of miner have you found the better for that?—I have always found the machine-places more efficiently spragged than those of the colliers'.
15. Which class, the coal- or gold-miner, is the most capable in that respect?—The quartz-miner is generally the more particular. He is very particular.
16. Do you think quartz-miners are men fit to be trusted with that class of work?—Yes; I have never found them faulty in the work.
17. When you say you have always found the machine-places better spragged than the colliers' places, are you referring to the men here?—Yes, at Denniston.
18. You remember the accident to Hart?—Yes.
19. Where were you on the 7th or 8th of August?—At Cardiff.
20. And you received the report of the accident on the 15th?—Yes; the date my stamp is on it.
21. Did you take any steps then in connection with the matter?—No.
22. Where did you go to?—I was telegraphed to, to go to Blackball.
23. Do you remember what date you left for Blackball?—I was there two days. I have a telegram of the 15th stating that a fatal accident had occurred.
24. And on your way you received this letter?—Yes.
25. Did you get any other communication from the management here about this case of Hart's before you got the telegram from Mr. Elliott?—No; the telegram was the first intimation I got. I made a stay at Reefton at the time, to inspect the quartz-mines.
26. This is the correspondence in reference to the matter?—Yes. [See exhibit No. 1.]
27. What is the usual practice with regard to accidents when you are advised they are not serious?—I had been here about four weeks before the accident, and did not think from the nature of the report that it was a serious accident.
28. I notice, from what Mr. Sowerby says, the doctor did not know whether it was serious or not?—I thought it was not serious. I may say that there is an understanding between the management and myself that every accident has to be reported.
29. Would you only hold an inquiry, or go up at once, when an accident is reported serious?—Yes, anything in the shape of a serious accident.
30. *The Chairman.*] You got a report on the 15th August as to the accident. On the 23rd August the Under-Secretary wired to you asking if you had received report of a serious accident to a lad in the Denniston Coal-mine, and directing an inquiry as required by Act. On the 24th August you wired to the Under-Secretary: "Report not received of recent serious accident to lad in Denniston Coal-mine. Have wired for particulars"?—I did not know that was the accident I had to report on. I wired to Mr. Lindop then.
31. Mr. Sowerby advised you on the 8th, of the accident to Hart: where did you get the authority for thinking the lad was only slightly injured?—I just took Mr. Sowerby's word for it, and thought it was a slight injury.
32. *Mr. Harden.*] Have you prepared a statement showing the number and percentage of accidents in the mine?—The certificates of the accidents are here. [Produced.]
33. Is this a true statement setting out the percentage of accidents?—That is the statistical statement prepared by myself.
34. Has the rate increased or decreased of late?—It is gradually decreasing. The first year (1898) the cost was 0.29d.; the second year (1899), 0.12d.
35. *The Chairman.*] What does this decimal of a penny mean?—It is 1d. per ton on the coal raised. I divide the moneys paid out by the number of tons of coal raised. The company pays ½d. per ton towards the Accident Fund. I take the total moneys expended on account of accidents, and divide by the output.