

taken by the management. The nature of the coal formation, with its clay backs and joints, is such as to have caused me a good deal of apprehension from time to time, but the management has been careful and satisfactory. There have been serious accidents, but minor accidents are of infrequent occurrence.

10. You have had no complaints from the men?—Not for a considerable time.

11. Do you find that the deputies' examinations are regularly made and the records properly kept?—Yes; in fact, the examinations are made more frequently than the Act requires. The statute provides that if more than one shift is employed the firemen and deputies' inspection must be made at intervals of not less than twelve hours; but here the inspections are made every eight hours, and two men, in company, make the morning examinations.

12. *Mr. Cochrane.*] You have heard the manager make a statement as to the time allowed before returning after a miss-fire: what is your opinion on the matter?—In coal-mines I consider that the period provided by the Act is a safe one—that is, three hours.

13. Then as to the question of permits, what do you consider a reasonable number of men to be looked after by a man who has no certificate but only one of these permits?—I presume you are referring to underground working. There are two sets of permits, one for opencast workings and one for underground. I think that eight men underground are too many.

14. How many would you favour?—The Act at one time limited it to six. I think, six, including the permit-holder, should be the maximum.

15. *Mr. Dowgray.*] You stated that the working of these clay backs caused you considerable anxiety?—Yes, for some time.

16. But you are pleased to be able to tell us that there have been very few serious accidents: do you attribute that to the skilful working of the mine?—Yes, and to the fact that the men are accustomed to the working of this class of coal.

17. The men working in this mine are fairly skilled?—Yes.

18. When on your rounds do you ever find the workmen neglecting to set timber?—I have very rarely had to call their attention to it; perhaps now and again the roof may have required attention as the result of being struck by a shot.

19. And the men carry out the regulations?—Yes, as far as I know.

20. *The Chairman.*] Is there anything else you would like to suggest?—While we are on the subject I would like to mention that a short time ago we had a few consignments of inferior blasting-powder. This is a matter to which I would like to direct the attention of the Commission. Mr. Barclay could tell you better than I can how that powder, which could not be used, has been brought here. It was not safe to use because it would not explode properly. Some of it was taken to another mine near here, and they could not use it at all.

21. A suggestion has already been made to the Commission that the Government should undertake the manufacture of detonators: have you any recommendation to make on the subject?—Well, I would not go into the matter of detonators—I have no complaints—but in regard to the explosives, we had a conference of Inspectors at Waihi, when we recommended that all explosives imported should bear the date of manufacture, so that the user might know how old the material was. You can understand that when the powder comes to hand in large consignments, and is stored in big quantities, cases are sometimes left in the back of the magazine, and, finally, when the stuff comes from the place where it has been stored it may be damp and not fit for use: so we thought, as Inspectors, after considering the matter, that if the date of manufacture were printed on the case of powder or gelignite—not necessarily on every inside package, but on the outside—it would act as a safeguard.

22. *Mr. Cochrane.*] Would you recommend anything else in addition to the date in regard to such powder?—Of course, I do not want to interfere with the Inspector of Explosives. If I went any further I would be trenching on his ground. I do not know that I can go any further.

23. *Mr. Dowgray.*] As a man of considerable experience, can you say whether it would get over the difficulty if the State undertook the manufacture of explosives?—I do not think my opinion on that point would be of much value.

24. But the opinion of a man holding a first-class mine-manager's certificate, with thirty-seven years' mining experience and twelve years' experience as an Inspector, is worth something?—Well, we want the best explosives to be supplied.

25. Would not the Government be able to give you the best?—We have not the ingredients here.

26. But if you could get the ingredients, would not State manufacture be the better way?—I cannot say. I am not a political economist.

27. *The Chairman.*] At any rate, you would like to see the very best material used?—Yes, I would add that latterly there has been a stricter inspection of explosives by that Department.

INVERCARGILL COURTHOUSE.—16TH SEPTEMBER, 1911.

EDWIN RIDLEY GREEN—examination continued.

28. *Mr. Cochrane.*] Have you the tables in regard to the Nightcaps Mine?—They are here, but I have not yet had time to peruse them. My clerk prepared them.

29. You have some other papers to present?—They are not ready for presentation yet.

30. Have you work to attend to other than purely mining work?—Yes, I have recently been given the administration of the Stone-quarries Act of last year. Then, a short time back the Public Works Department was short-handed and I was asked to undertake the inspection of some of their roadworks, which I did; but latterly I have been relieved of that work. There are one or two other matters also which I may be asked to attend to from time to time.