

44. With your experience as a miner can you tell where the stone roof is bad when a piece of stone is 5 ft. thick?—No, though it may sound all right. In this place, I was up there this morning, but I was not placing a great deal of reliance on it. There were large blisters on it. There are places where you can rely on it, especially in No. 3 section, but most of the time you cannot.

45. When men are working in six-hour places, how do they get out when the rope is going?—Walk out.

46. Do you get permission from the manager to travel on the road?—Yes; that is, if it is a wet place. I have not worked in a wet place—a six-hour place—since that rope has been put in. We have worked in hot places.

47. Do you get a reduction of hours for hot places?—We have difficulty in doing so.

48. *The Chairman.*] What do you call a hot place—what temperature?—Well, we have no thermometer. It is not altogether the heat—sometimes the air is not very good.

49. Who decides what is a six-hour place?—I do not know. I suppose, if the men contend it is a six-hour place, they have some say in it as well as the management. There is hardly such a thing in the mine as a six-hour place unless they are wet. We do not get a reduction, as a rule, for hot places.

50. Have you had any experience of taking temperatures?—No.

51. Have you seen them taken?—No.

52. So that you do not know what the temperature would be?—No.

53. *Mr. Dowgray.*] You heard a remark made to-day while travelling in the mine—I believe, by the Inspector of Mines—that the men prefer working on pillars to the solid places?—I have been trying to get out of the pillars for fifteen years.

54. For what reason?—There is not so much strain.

55. What do you mean by “strain”?—Well, listening for small bits dropping. Sometimes I know there is something wrong.

56. *The Chairman.*] Where were you when the stone fell to-day?—A trucker was in there, and the box was not quite full. I said to him, “Give us a pull,” and just as we got into safety it came down.

57. *Mr. Dowgray.*] Do you think the company would get as much coal under the system you advocate as under the present system?—I do not think there could be much difference. The coal is buried a good deal, and it really belongs to us; whereas if we had a coal roof we would get it practically all.

58. Can you tell us what is the difference between the stentons?—Generally, about 60 ft.

59. Do you think that is a satisfactory distance?—We would certainly like them closer sometimes.

60. *Mr. Fletcher.*] Could you take any top coal out and leave some up with safety?—Yes, in many places we could.

61. If 4 ft. or 5 ft. or 6 ft. of coal were left up, could you get the other with safety?—Yes, because we know when the coal is pretty good.

62. Did you say that 12 ft. props are the longest you use?—Yes; but 6 ft. and 7 ft. is the ordinary length.

63. *The Chairman.*] For taking out pillars?—We use the same size props. Then, if it does not fall we have to shoot it down.

64. *Mr. Fletcher.*] Do you consider 60 ft. is a long distance between cut-throughs?—Well, as a rule, I do not consider it too far. It depends upon the air, which is sometimes very good.

65. But it would weaken the place?—In my opinion, it would not make much difference to put them in oftener than that.

66. But if you drove a cut-through every 10 yards you would reduce the strength?—Perhaps. If they were narrow it would reduce the strength of the pillar.

67. But if they were narrow you would get the air in?—A 6 ft. stenton would be quite sufficient.

68. But the practice is to have the pillars as large as possible. I would advocate larger pillars than you have here?—And then split them?

69. It does not matter at the end—it would give more strength behind you: do you not think so?—Yes; but sometimes we have to go too far from cover.

70. But supposing you left some of the coal up, say, 5 ft. or 6 ft., would it be safe then?—It would be better if we were leaving a certain amount of coal. It would depend on the height of the stone.

71. *Mr. Cochrane.*] Do you leave unused gelignite and detonators in the mine overnight?—That has been the practice up till lately.

72. And were the management aware of your doing so?—Yes, I suppose so; it has been the practice for years.

73. Then, as to the roof, does the natural rock roof vary—have you a false roof at places?—It is very seldom; as a rule, it is coal.

74. I am not speaking of any coal that may be left. The usual roof is what?—Conglomerate.

75. Do you ever find clay underneath it?—Very seldom, though I have seen it in places. There may be 2 ft. or 3 ft. of clay, and that is the worst roof you can possibly get in the Kaitangata Mine.

76. As to the explosives, are they not served out in canisters?—Yes.

77. What sort of canisters—the ordinary canisters?—Yes, about 1 ft. long, which holds sixteen plugs of gelignite.

78. And it is in these you take the explosive in?—Yes; and we have a little tin for the caps, too.

79. *Mr. Reed.*] In regard to the fall which you say took place to-day—I was with Mr. McAlister—you said it was dangerous; how did you know?—By small pieces trickling down.

80. Had you sounded it previously?—Yes, this morning.