

81. And you found it unsafe?—No, just as it was yesterday.
82. How was that?—It was supposed to be as solid as a rock.
83. So that the sounding was not efficient to-day?—It was just as good as it was yesterday.
84. And the sounding was no criterion as to its state?—No.
85. You spoke of working the pillars by leaving an alternative rib?—Yes.
86. You would leave a shell: would you expect to be paid solid rates for driving through the pillars?—It is all one rate here.
87. So that you would get the same rate?—Yes.
88. Regarding the explosive which you said was left underground, how much was served out?—I could not tell you that.
89. *The Chairman.*] Can you say for certain when you left explosives underground, and what quantity?—As many as four shots—sixteen plugs.
90. *Mr. Reed.*] Where did you leave it?—At the corner of the pillar.
91. What was it in?—Tins.
92. *The Chairman.*] How long is it since then?—There is a new practice now.
93. Who instituted this new practice?—I cannot say; I was just told by the deputy.
94. How long ago?—About a week ago.
95. *Mr. Reed.*] Are you sure that the management knew?—I should think so.
96. Are you sure—this is an impeachment of the company?—It is possible they did not know. I am not charging them with anything; but our tins were always there for any one to see.
97. Are you positive that the management was aware of this being done on any one occasion?—I do not know. I only assume it. I should think they were.
98. Is it not a fact that a shift's supply is served out at the beginning of each shift?—The men who want ammunition get it from the man in charge.
99. One shift's supply?—Yes.
100. *The Chairman.*] Could you say why the new arrangement came to be instituted?—No, we were just told to take our ammunition out.
101. *Mr. Dowgray.*] The new system only came into force about a week ago?—Yes.
102. You stated that the roof was as solid as a rock; who told you that?—I formed my own opinion of it. Mr. McAlister was in there yesterday, and thought so too—those were his words. He passed that remark to Sam Clarkson, who was working on the other side. He told me to trim down the loose coal.
103. It only goes to prove that you cannot always judge by the sound?—Yes.
104. I believe you said that the other stentons are 60 ft. apart; are you sure that is the system here?—I have never measured them, but I believe that is the distance. It may be longer sometimes.
105. *The Chairman.*] You did not draw the manager's attention to the stone when he was there to-day?—No, I could not say that it was bad.
106. Did you ask him a question about the pillar?—It was as to how to take out that pillar.
107. *Mr. Dowgray.*] When I was going round I saw a number of stoppings: are they always kept up like that?—Well, where I am working just now there have been stoppings put in this last two or three weeks.
108. The company always keeps these stoppings well up?—Yes, as well as they can.
109. How do you get your lamps lit when they go out?—We send them up by the trucker, who gives them to the horse-driver.
110. Are you not held responsible for your lamps?—We generally send them out.
111. Do you think the system could be improved?—Yes.
112. Can you suggest any improved method?—I do not know, unless we had a fire-station further in. When a man's light goes out it is out a long time.
113. You have been here a long time: have you ever had anything to do with this winding-apparatus at Castle Hill?—I was there three or four years ago when they were having a trial. The executive were asked to attend it.
114. Were they satisfied with the system?—No, we were not satisfied with it. We let it stand as it was, though we did not approve of it.
115. Have the men come up it?—One or two men went down that day.
116. Did they express any opinion?—No, but they got half-drowned with smoke and water.
117. What is the opinion of the men in regard to the escape shaft?—They do not approve of it by any means.
118. Do they ever discuss it amongst themselves?—Sometimes—if anything happens they may say a word or two.
119. Does everybody know the road to the escape shaft in your mine—the Kaitangata?—No; it would not be an easy thing to find it.
120. Do you not think you should have fingerposts?—Yes, we could do with more signposts.
121. You would suggest that fingerposts should be put up pointing the road to the return shaft?—Yes; there are one or two now, but they get neglected.

WILLIAM NICHOLAS sworn and examined. (No. 24.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—A miner.
2. Do you hold any office in the mine or in the union?—No.
3. How long have you been mining?—About twenty-five years.
4. Where?—In the Old Country, Queensland, and New Zealand.
5. How long have you been working in this mine?—About seventeen years.
6. Have you had any experience of taking temperatures?—No.