

17. Have you anything to say on the sanitary question?—As far as the Kaitangata Mine is concerned there are no sanitary appliances. I think that the management could very easily arrange places where the men could go—out-of-the-way places, say one in each section, so that it would not be a nuisance to the workmen.

18. You heard what the other witnesses had to say about the present practice: do you agree with them?—I hardly agree with the previous witness, although he may have seen more of it than I did. My experience is that the men usually try to get into a place which is finished. They do not go into a place where the men are travelling. One of the Commissioners asked a witness whether they used the return airway. Well, it is very difficult to say what is the return airway in the Kaitangata Mine. The men are working to within a few feet of the shaft, and they have to utilize the air there. I have heard of some cases, and have known of them too, where a nuisance was caused through the men going into the air-courses, but men generally try to go into other places.

19. But you think conveniences ought to be provided?—Yes.

20. *Mr. Dowgray.*] That bears out previous witnesses' contention that what may be an old bord to-day may be a working-place to-morrow?—Yes.

21. Have you had any experience on men being sent into places which were considered dangerous?—Yes. I remember one case in particular where two of us were working two or three years ago. We considered it unsafe, and we objected to work in it, and told the deputy so when he came round. He stopped the place. It was stopped three or four days, and the coal fell down.

22. *The Chairman.*] If there is a disagreement between the deputy and the men, cannot you go to the manager?—We have the right to go to the manager if the deputy considers the place safe and we think it unsafe, but the manager generally takes the deputy's opinion.

23. Is the deputy not held responsible for the safety of the working-places?—As far as I know.

24. *Mr. Cochrane.*] I think you said you would suggest a given height for the working in pillars?—I consider that they should work them a regulation height and go no higher.

25. What should that height be fixed at?—About 15 ft. or 16 ft. The men should always have the chance of sounding the roof.

26. Would that height not depend on the different classes of coal?—I should not think so.

27. You would make it the same in a strong place as in a place with soft coal?—The men would have to sound the place if it were strong as well as if it were soft. Where you cannot get up to the roof or prop it, the only thing you can rely on for safety is the sounding.

GEORGE CLARK sworn and examined. (No. 29.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—Assistant storeman at the Kaitangata Mine.

2. What is it you wish to refer to?—I wish to explain how the explosives are given out. We have different-sized tins, of which I produce samples [produced]. They hold from sixteen to twenty plugs. Each man has his shots put in these tins. They generally get through from two to four shots, or twenty plugs—that is the maximum. The caps are rolled in paper, and served out in one of these tins.

3. Do you ever question the men as to whether they have used all those shots on that particular shift or not?—No. They do not tell me how long the supply I give them will last, or whether they are going to use it all to-day or to-morrow. I keep a record of all explosives which go out.

4. *Mr. Fletcher.*] When the men come to you for explosives you expect that they will not take more than sufficient for that day?—I cannot say that. They simply say they want four or five shots. I have heard them say, "I will not come back till to-morrow."

5. *The Chairman.*] Have the men not been impressed with the fact that they must not take more than one day's supply, or do you think they do not know?—I do not know.

6. Is there any obligation on the storeman not to supply any more than a certain quantity?—Yes, 5 lb. is the maximum. I do not give them more than half. Sometimes they get 2 lb.

7. So far as you are concerned, the supply to one man never exceeds half the maximum?—That is so.

8. You do not inquire when they are going to use them?—No.

9. How do the men work: do they work with mates?—Yes, two men work together.

10. If the men on the night shift take down explosives, do the men on the next shift take some more?—Yes.

11. Are they mates with the men on the previous shift?—I cannot say.

12. You do not take a record of the supply for the different places?—No, only as to the quantity served out to the men.

13. *Mr. Reed.*] Are you aware of the law on the subject?—Yes, sir.

14. It states that more explosives than is required for one shift shall not be taken into the mine during that shift: are you aware of that?—Yes.

15. But just now you gave us an instance of the law being broken?—I understand that it is for the day's supply. I believe what the men say.

16. Is it not the storeman's duty to stop at the maximum quantity? Are you instructed by the management in the matter?—The manager showed me the Coal-mines Act, and told me of the provision.

17. Mr. Carson gave you an instruction to carry out the law?—He showed me the Act, and I took that as the instruction.

18. *Mr. Dowgray.*] Mr. Carson has never specially instructed the men not to take in more than one day's supply?—No, he only showed me the Act.

19. Is there not a very bad road to that magazine?—It is greasy.

20. Do not the men grumble about it?—Yes, I have heard them grumble, but some men will grumble at anything.