

had more accidents to men working in bords than in the extraction of pillars. I have been engaged extracting pillars since 1890, and during all those years I do not think a miner has been injured when extracting pillars—not by the smallest accident. I would also like to say that there is a great difference between the views of the miners on this matter a few years ago and the evidence given here by them to-day. When we were withdrawing our men from a previous mine to go to our present one they did not want to leave their pillar-work, simply because, I think, they could make more money pillaring, and it was just as safe as other work. In my opinion, the pillar-work is no more dangerous than—in fact, not so dangerous as—working in bords. Then, the secretary of the union spoke of work on the night shift. Well, we have had no night-shift work for nearly two years. We did not keep the men working with only the natural ventilation—we lit the furnace every day at 3.30 o'clock p.m. The furnace was capable of producing 10,000 ft. of air, and was kept going by the deputy.

6. You have closed your furnace now?—Yes, at present it is closed; but we sometimes use it. I may say, sir, I did not come here with the intention of giving evidence, but I thought I would like to say that I disagree with the idea of the check inspectors being able to go down and make an inspection every day.

7. *Mr. Dowgray.*] Do you know anything about the longwall system of extracting pillars?—Yes; it was all worked in the longwall system where I come from in the Old Country.

8. Do you agree with me that with the longwall system the working-places are about 20 or 30 yards apart?—It is about 20 yards, I think.

9. *Mr. Reed.*] As regards the noise, is it not very much greater under the longwall system than that made in pillar-extraction here?—Yes.

10. Have you mined at Home?—Yes.

11. Did you ever hear the miners complain there about the noise under the longwall system?—No. I might say that when I began extracting pillars in the present mine we had three men at least working together; then they said there should be only one man; and now they say there should be not less than two men.

12. *Mr. Fletcher.*] What was the height of seam where you were working in the longwall system?—From 20 in. to 3 ft. 6 in.

13. What height is the seam here?—About 20 ft.

14. *Mr. Dowgray.*] In what part of the Old Country did you work in the longwall system?—In Airdrie.

15. How far were the working-places apart?—As I said, about 20 yards.

16. How many men worked in a place?—Two.

#### GRANITY (MARTIN'S HALL).—9TH OCTOBER, 1911.

JAMES NEWTON examined. (No. 37.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You are Inspector of Mines for this district?—Yes.

2. You have some statistics to submit to the Commission regarding these mines?—Yes, a list of fatal and serious accidents in the West Coast Inspection District from 1905 to 1907; a list of fatal and serious accidents in the same district from 1908 to September, 1911; air-measurements at the Westport-Stockton Mine and Millerton Mine; and analyses of mine-air samples taken by me in these mines. [Exhibit 18.]

VICTOR TOMASI sworn and examined. (No. 38.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—A coal-miner.

2. How many years' experience have you had?—Thirteen.

3. Where?—Denniston and Stockton.

4. Which mine are you working in now?—Stockton.

5. Do you hold any office in the mine?—No.

6. Do you hold any position in the union?—Yes, I am secretary to the Stockton Miners' Union.

7. What is your membership?—One hundred and fifty.

8. And does that comprise all the miners on the field, or what proportion of the miners are members of your union?—It comprises all the miners on the field.

9. Have you been appointed by the union to lay these matters before the Commission?—Yes.

10. And in regard to these matters your members are unanimous?—Yes.

11. Now, what subjects do you wish to bring to the attention of the Commission?—As to ventilation, attendants at fans, firemen's reports, sanitation, baths, accidents, and check inspectors.

12. What have you to say as regards ventilation?—Well, I would like to recommend that 150 cubic feet of air be brought round to each individual in the working-face.

13. Circulated in the working-faces?—Yes, or where the men are working, and also that the air be split into different sections in the mine.

14. Instead of the whole of the air circulating through the whole of the faces, that it be circulated in splits?—Yes.

15. What is the practice in the Stockton Mine: is the air circulated through the whole of the faces?—Yes.

16. What have you to say in regard to the attendance at the fans?—I would like to recommend that some one should be in constant attendance at the fan. At the present time when the fan stops it is some time before they can get the air going through the mine again.

17. Have you known the fan to stop?—I have, in different mines—occasionally in this mine.