

52. Was it not on account of a culvert breaking?—You can call it a culvert if you like, but it was really a brattice conduit which conveyed the air into the far places.

53. Was that reported to you on the 26th August?—I do not know the date, but I had it repaired.

54. Was there any record of that made in the mine-books?—It is in the check inspectors' report.

55. Does Mr. Bennie note that?—He may have.

56. Did you ever tell him?—No.

57. Did you ever tell Mr. Bennie that Conn had been burnt until Mr. Bennie wrote to you on the 8th January, 1914?—Yes. Mr. Bennie knew he was burnt.

58. Did you ever tell Mr. Bennie?—I never told him, but I wrote to him.

59. Can you produce your letter?—Yes, I will produce a copy of my letter. [Letter-book produced.] I produce a list dated 29th March, 1912, which contains, amongst other entries, "16th February, 1912: David Conn, burns to face and arms."

60. It might have been by powder or an explosion according to that?—Yes.

61. You did not say it was an explosion?—No.

62. Will you show me where you told Mr. Bennie that Conn was burnt by a gas-explosion?—No.

63. You have not got it?—No.

64. It was not until he wrote you on the 8th January of this year that you gave him the information in your letter of the 14th?—He asked me for a two-years list of men who had been burnt by powder-explosions and the ignition of firedamp.

65. Why did you keep that back?—Because they were to a great extent not serious, and I hardly thought it necessary to report them.

66. How long was Conn here?—I cannot say.

67. Is there nothing in the Coal-mines Act which requires you to report such cases?—Not unless it is a serious injury.

68. Was he not ill for over eighteen days?—I dare say.

69. Is that not a serious accident within the meaning of the Act? How many days has a man to be ill before it is considered a serious accident?—It is not the illness. A man may get a smack in the eye and be off work for twelve months.

70. How do you decide whether a burn should be reported under the Act?—I consider the nature of the injuries received by a man, or get a medical certificate.

71. Did you get one in that case?—We would get a verbal one.

72. But did you?—I could not tell you whether we did or not.

73. Is there anything you wish to add to that?—Nothing else.

74. Is the present shaft safe at Huntly? Are you satisfied that the mine-shaft is absolutely safe?—Yes.

75. Are you satisfied?—Yes, quite.

76. Now, before we leave the question of those injuries, will you please produce your letter of the 14th January, 1914, written to the Inspector in reply to his of the 8th?—Yes; it is as follows: "I beg to acknowledge your letter of the 8th instant regarding accidents by powder-explosions and the ignition of firedamp. In the Extended Mine there were two cases of burning by explosions of firedamp during the past two years, but not serious. The first occurred to David Conn, a shiftman. There had been a fall of roof at the face of the west heading, and he with other men had been sent to repair same. During the course of repairs slabbing had to be done, and while putting the slabs into position overhead he got his naked light, which was on his head, too far into the fall; some gas which had apparently collected in a pocket was ignited, and he received burns to both arms. Date of occurrence, 16/2/12. This place had been inspected and reported all clear just previous to the shift commencing. The next occurred to William Willcox, who was a roadman at that time. It appears that on the previous afternoon this man had commenced to lay a turn into a cross heading, which was driven in a distance of 15 yards and brattice carried right to the face. He did not complete the laying of the turn, but went in a little earlier next morning, but not before the examining deputy had inspected the place. At the point where he was laying the turn, 15 yards back from the face, an ignition of firedamp took place. Mr. Wood, the certificated manager, in company with Deputy Duncan and Assistant Deputy Wood, immediately inspected the place after the accident and found no trace of any gas. It may have collected in a roof-cavity through a disarrangement of the brattice, but Mr. Wood is of the opinion that the acetylene lamp he was carrying at the time on his head had exploded. I might add these explosions occurred during the time the small fan was doing duty, and there is no doubt—although plenty as regards quantity to comply with the Act—there was not sufficient volume to keep down small accumulations during the time the mine was not working; but since the new fan has been erected, these troubles are things of the past. Date of occurrence, 26/3/12. Regarding the burning of Alexander Reid by an explosion of blasting-powder on the 14th December, 1912, this accident was reported to you under date 16th December, 1912. In Ralph's Mine a roadman named Arthur Ruston went into an old bord in Doloe's dip, to lift some rails near the face, and he ignited a small accumulation of gas near the face with his naked light. He escaped without injury."

77. In regard to this explosion which caused the injury to Conn, it was two years to the month after the burning of Conn took place when you first reported in writing to the Inspector that it had occurred?—Yes.

78. That was not in the Taupiri Mine?—No, but it belongs to the Taupiri Company. I am not the manager of that mine.