

338. The Taupiri Coal-mines (Limited) tried to get out of something which you considered it right and proper to do?—Yes, because Mr. Roderick McKenzie, then Minister of Mines, asked me to act in the matter.

339. Then, the value of your services to the State in connection with coal-mines is only the value represented by your reports which you are instructed to make?—As regards certain points in connection with State coal-mines my duties are official. My duties are carried out in the office as well as at the mines.

340. Your duties, so far as the stability and safety of coal-mines are concerned?—I have told you that half a dozen times.

341. Is the value of your services only what is represented by your visits or actions when visiting the mine?—No, I believe my services have saved a great deal of trouble and money.

342. You said to the Commission that you were here to tell the truth, and that up to that time that had not been done by some others?—I added “to a great extent, in my opinion.” I said I intended to tell the whole truth, which up to my giving evidence had not been told to a great extent, in my opinion.

343. Do you mean by the truth, that which differs from your opinion?—No; “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.”

344. Do you mean merely that which differs from your opinion?—I mean on questions of fact.

345. Now, when you say “to a great extent,” can you further explain that term by telling us whether each witness to a great extent concealed the truth, or whether a number of witnesses stated what was false, and a number stated what was true?—I shall not specify, even if you ask me. In my opinion, there was some concealment of the truth. If you ask me further, I shall not answer you.

346. You tell us that the truth has been concealed to a great extent: do you mean as far as a large number of persons are concerned, or that all the persons have not spoken the truth?—I did not say all the persons.

347. You mean that a number of the witnesses have spoken the truth?—Some witnesses have told the truth.

348. Entirely?—I believe they have—some of them.

349. Others have stated what is false?—In my opinion, untrue as to facts.

350. Taking the mining experts, do you class them in the category of truth-tellers or in the other?—Mining experts are both good and bad.

351. But the mining experts who have given evidence in this case?—I shall not specify. I decline to name whom I mean. I am not going to pick them out.

352. Some of those who have given expert evidence, you believe, have sworn falsely?—They have not told the whole truth.

353. They have suppressed the truth?—Well, yes, they have suppressed the whole truth, in my mind. I feel sure that certain gentlemen here have not told the whole truth in their evidence, but I shall not mention their names.

354. *The Chairman.*] Deliberately, do you mean?—I say they have not given the whole circumstances as known to them.

355. Such as they thought would be of use to this Commission?—They could have given more information to this Commission than they have done. Perhaps they have not wilfully suppressed it, but the whole truth has not come out in connection with this inquiry.

356. *Mr. Napier.*] You mean “suppressed,” and you adhere to “suppressed”?—Yes, I do adhere to it. I think they could have been more candid in giving the whole truth. I made my first remark in haste; I will withdraw. I will say that some witnesses, in my opinion, have not helped the Commission to the full extent of their knowledge and ability.

357. When you are nettled do you speak in haste?—It is not often that I have been connected with a case such as this.

358. You have had to do with a great many Royal Commissions and inquiries?—Yes, several.

359. You are not a novice?—No, possibly.

360. Until Mr. Fletcher's report to Mr. Bennie on the explosions which caused the injuries to Kelly and others, you knew nothing about the explosions in these mines?—I knew nothing till last Christmas.

361. As far as explosions are concerned, the public have no guarantee that the Mines Department is well informed?—In this case because the fact was suppressed. I think, generally, we know. I think this is a unique case of suppression. I have never known another company suppress facts regarding explosions as this one has done.

362. You have told us that until lately you did not know that any gas was generated in the Taupiri Mine?—I did not think it was in dangerous quantities here before I was told.

363. Did not you tell us how surprised you were when the men told you about the explosions?—No; I was surprised because of gas being present in dangerous quantities. Every mine gives off gas in small quantities.

364. It is impossible to get a coal-mine without a trace of gas?—Yes, without a trace.

365. The gas is in the coal?—Yes.

366. Then, when you said to the men at the Exhibition, “You have no gas up there,” you meant in dangerous quantities?—In perceptible quantities.

367. That is to say, in quantities of more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.?—Just so.

368. Then, the Mines Department and the Inspecting Engineer of Mines were for seven years in entire ignorance of the fact that gas in perceptible quantities was generated in the Taupiri mines?—That is true.

369. Do you consider that a system which permits that is adequate?—I do not think it is adequate. I think there might be more Inspectors in a country like this.