

have seen here, of course I write to my chief, as my letters show. I appreciated the danger here. Take my letters as an example regarding Ralph's colliery as to the way in which I carry out my duties. I have no direct power, therefore I act through my chief.

220. Do you initiate a report as to the incompetence of a Mining Inspector, or do you wait for an instruction from the Under-Secretary?—Do you mean do I find fault with my colleagues?

221. Do you initiate such reports, or do you wait for a request from the Under-Secretary?—I report the actual facts as I find them, leaving my chief to condemn or otherwise.

222. When you say that you have to report as to the competency or ability—?—I did not say that I reported upon the competency.

223. You do not report upon the competency or ability of an Inspector of Mines?—I am not requested to do so.

224. You do not do it?—Naturally, I do not do what I am not requested to do, excepting when I see a serious defect. As regards my colleagues I do not report them and condemn their actions. I report upon the facts of the case, and my chief does the condemning, if any, not me.

225. You would report the facts upon which an accusation might be founded?—My chief can form his own conclusions.

226. You do report the fact?—To the best of my knowledge, always, sir.

227. In order that you may be in a position to report the fact, do you place yourself in a position of ascertaining the facts?—I always get enough facts to satisfy me in my own mind perfectly that I am right and my judgment is sound to base my report on.

228. And you are editor of the report to Parliament?—The whole of the reports of the Inspectors of Mines are sent to me, and for the last eight years I have edited them for the information of Parliament, and I have never received complaints as to what appeared in those reports. I do not write the Inspector's reports—I am not responsible for the words contained therein. I simply put their report in as appendices. I can delete nothing that appears above the writer's signature. I do not bind myself to agree with any opinions in such reports; but, of course, my own report I am entirely responsible for.

229. You are the reporter to Parliament on the condition of the coal-mines of New Zealand?—I address the Under-Secretary, who hands the report to Parliament.

230. Do you know where it is going?—Yes.

231. We may call it the parliamentary report?—It is the official report of the Department for the year.

232. Your official report?—Yes.

233. Representing the Mines Department?—Representing the Inspection Branch of the Department.

234. Then have you always qualified yourself to be able to state the facts correctly to Parliament?—To the best of my belief, yes. I go through the whole of New Zealand, and every little and big mine in the Dominion receives my attention, more or less. I do not claim that I can devote much attention to any individual mine, but considering the great area that I have to deal with, I think my reports are reliable, to the best of my knowledge, and always have been so. I have never received complaints on the subject.

235. Do you think your reports are a sufficient guide for Parliament?—Parliament has never asked for any more.

236. Do you consider that your report, together with those of the Inspectors of Mines as appendices, constitute a sufficient guide for Parliament?—A guide on what question?

237. On the question of privately owned coal-mines?—My reports are proof of that.

238. Are the reports sufficient to enable Parliament to make the necessary provisions by regulation?—They are considered to be.

239. Do you consider them to be—I want to know?—Well, Parliament has raised my salary, so that my reports must be considered adequate.

240. Parliament has raised your salary?—Yes. It is at present £600 per annum and travelling-expenses 15s. a day for the one appointment—that of Inspecting Engineer.

241. I want to seek to ascertain whether your services are worth that, or worthless to the country?—That is an insult, sir.

242. You say that in your judgment your reports are a sufficient guide; have you reported to Parliament at any time as to the state of the Taupiri mines?—I only discovered their state this year. I have not reported to Parliament for this year yet. It was Christmas or the beginning of the New Year when I first became aware of those explosions. You may rest assured when I write my next report I will deal very fully with the matter.

243. How long have you occupied your present position?—About eight years.

244. Then, for seven years it was possible for you to occupy your present position and to keep the country in the dark as to the conditions of the Taupiri Mine?—The condition of the Taupiri mines was obtained by accident, not by report from the company, which suppressed the facts.

245. Then you really discovered the true facts about the Taupiri Mine by accident?—Yes, by accident I discovered them; by good fortune, I may say.

246. Then if you had not had that good fortune you might have gone on for another ten years without discovering the condition of these mines?—Apparently, dealing with such people for suppressing facts.

247. Then you consider that the people connected with this company have a special aptitude for suppressing facts from the Inspector of Mines?—In this case they have been most successful—in the case of these previous explosions.

248. Do you consider that a system of inspection which can be rendered nugatory by the deceiving of officials over a long period of years is a satisfactory one?—I say that it is the unsatisfactory system of management which is to blame.