

- (2.) Carbon-dioxide is a heavy gas having a somewhat sharp odour and taste. It is known to miners as "choke damp" and "black damp," and, being heavy, a considerable current of air is required to remove it. It is formed by the breathing of men and horses, the burning of lights, and all blasting operations, and is also given off by certain rock-strata. Air containing any more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. is very unwholesome, and from 8 to 10 per cent. is absolutely fatal to life.
- (3.) Sulphuretted hydrogen is a more uncommon gas than the other two. Lights will not burn in it. It may be detected by its strong smell. It is given off by rotten timber, which is largely used in the mines, and other decaying matter, stagnant water, and human excrement. From 1 to 4 per cent. is fatal.
- (4.) Carburetted hydrogen, the "fire-damp" of coal-mines, is a light gas, forming when mixed with air a dangerous explosive mixture. It is found to a greater or less extent in all mines. The greatest explosive force is attained when the gas is diluted with air in the proportion of one part of gas to eight to thirteen parts of air.
- (c.) The dust in mines is very injurious to the workers, and is to the largest extent responsible for the sickness amongst underground workers known as fibrosis of the lungs or "miners' disease," which is a disease different from "phthisis," though it resembles that disease closely, still having distinctive features.
- (d.) Injuries to the knees from wrenches, working in cramped positions, and weight-lifting.
- (e.) Rheumatic affections, including sciatica.
- (f.) Heart-strain, through absence of proper ventilation and inhalement of poisonous gases under exertion.
- The above are the principal reasons why we require the hours of labour underground to be restricted.
- We might further add that, under the very best possible conditions that a mine can be worked, the employment will always be an unhealthy one.
- We respectfully submit the above petition to the consideration of your honourable House.
- And your petitioners will ever pray.

J. BAILEY AND OTHERS.

NOTE.—The different petitions are all in the same form.

## REPORTS.

### REPORT ON THE MINING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

THE Goldfields and Mines Committee, having taken evidence and given careful consideration to the provisions of the Mining Act Amendment Bill, have now the honour to report that, as in their judgment the rate of wages and the hours of labour in mines can be better dealt with in the Arbitration Court than by direct legislation, they recommend that the Bill be not allowed to proceed.

JAMES COLVIN, Chairman.

Parliament Buildings, 21st August, 1903.

### REPORT ON THE COAL-MINES ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2) BILL.

THE Goldfields and Mines Committee, to whom was referred the above-mentioned Bill, have the honour to report that, having taken evidence and carefully considered the provisions of the same, they recommend that the Bill be allowed to proceed subject to the amendments shown in a copy of the Bill attached hereto.

JAMES COLVIN, Chairman.

Parliament Buildings, 21st August, 1903.

REPORT on the PETITIONS of—No. 95, J. Bailey and 367 others; No. 385, E. A. Graham and 103 others; No. 383, A. Steele and 5 others on behalf of the Amalgamated Miners' Union, numbering 730 members; No. 380, Thomas Young and 246 others; No. 381, G. Newton and 208 others; No. 384, R. McMillan and 434 others; No. 382, E. Martin and 387 others; No. 379, J. Jenkins and 367 others.

PETITIONERS represent that the hours of labour for men employed underground in mines are too long, and they seek to have legislation passed whereby their hours of work may be reduced.

The Goldfields and Mines Committee have the honour to report on the above petitions that they recommend that the prayer of the petitioners be given effect to.

Parliament Buildings, 21st August, 1903.

JAMES COLVIN, Chairman.

### REPORTS ON THE MINING ACT AMENDMENT BILL AND THE COAL-MINES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

THE Goldfields and Mines Committee have the honour to report that they recommend that the evidence taken by them in connection with the Mining Act Amendment Bill and the Coal-mines Act Amendment Bill be printed.

JAMES COLVIN, Chairman.

Parliament Buildings, 3rd September, 1903.