

21. Well, you ask for more powers as an inspector. Of course, some workmen's inspectors may have sufficient experience, but some of them may not?—That may be so, but that remark may also apply to other men who are not sufficiently experienced.

22. But you should give some guarantee against interference by inexperienced men. What test would you make them pass to prove their qualification?—Well, that is not a question I can answer exactly. I have no doubt that they should have a certain amount of experience, and that that experience should be proved before they should get these powers. I do not advocate that as seriously as I do the necessity for them to have the right to inspect the mine more frequently—even if they are not given as great powers as I suggested—so that they should be recognized a little more than they are at the present time.

23. When you speak of complaints, is not that rather vague? You might easily get a complaint made only to give you the right to go down?—I do not say that it should be necessary to have a complaint before the inspector can go down. As a matter of fact, he is not anxious to run round the mine for fun. He would need to be satisfied that there is a necessity for him to go down.

24. To what extent does the inspection interfere with the working conditions of the mine?—I am not aware of it interfering in any way, except that if the manager exercises his right to accompany the inspector. That may take him away from other work, but he does not need to go.

25. But what about using the ways when the ropes are going?—Well, the custom here has been for the workmen's inspector to go down before the rope starts in the morning, so as not to interfere with the working of the mine.

26. Have you any other matter to bring before the Commission?—Well, in addition to my previous suggestion, it is the opinion of my union that workmen's inspectors, seeing that they are carrying out an important duty, should be paid by the Government.

27. Well, now, has your union passed any resolutions in regard to matters to be placed before this Commission, or can you speak with the authority of any number of any members of your union?—Well, sir, I can only speak with the authority of the management committee of the union. The matter has been left entirely in their hands as dealing with the Kaitangata and Castle Hill Mines.

28. What matters are they?—The most of the matters have been dealt with by previous witnesses.

29. I suppose you have no experience of working pillars in the mine?—No; but I might say that there is one matter which I think should be taken into consideration, though it was not brought up since the Commission was set up. A general meeting of the union here carried a motion condemning the present system.

30. Did the witnesses we have already examined voice the general opinion of the union?—I take it, sir, that they do. They are representative witnesses and experienced miners. There is also another matter which I personally wish to bring forward, but not as secretary of the union. Personally, I object very much to anybody being allowed to travel on that travelling-road in the Kaitangata Mine while the rope is in motion, because I consider it is anything but safe. We have known many runaways on that incline. There have been no accidents, but that is by good luck, I think.

31. *Mr. Dowgray.*] In your official capacity as secretary of the union have you had occasion to discuss the dangerous methods practised with the management?—Yes; on one occasion our executive met the management and we discussed certain matters in connection with pillar-extraction, and the manager told us that if a miner considered his place unsafe they would almost have no alternative but to dismiss the men.

32. *The Chairman.*] When was that?—It was during last year. I cannot give you the exact date. Of course, when we pointed out the seriousness of his statement he toned it down, and tried to make it refer to something in the past; but he made that statement, and it can be proved by witnesses who will come before the Commission to-morrow.

33. When did the variation or toning down take place—at the same interview?—Yes, when I pointed out the seriousness of his attitude.

34. Well, what was the upshot of that: did it go any further? Was there any result?—Well, that was only a side-issue which arose at the interview.

35. *Mr. Dowgray.*] Did you discuss the methods suggested by the three previous witnesses as to pillar-extraction?—No, not at that time.

36. *The Chairman.*] What other dangerous practices were you discussing?—We were discussing the matter of taking a strip alongside the pillar when the side of the pillar was blocked by a fall of stone. We were trying to persuade the management that it was better to cut through the pillar again rather than take a strip alongside the pillar when carrying out pillar-extraction.

37. *Mr. Dowgray.*] Do you mean, like McGhee's place in Castle Hill Mine?—Yes, that could be said to be typical.

38. Are the men not allowed discretionary powers as to when the place is safe or not?—Well, I really could not say. When men say a place is unsafe they tell me they are ridiculed—they are told it is as safe as a house.

39. Have you known of a case of a man going home when they thought a place was not safe to work in, and the management thought it was safe enough?—Well, I cannot say as to that, but sometimes there is a difference of opinion between the officials of the mine and the men.

40. Have you ever known men to leave their places in such cases?—Yes.

41. What was the result?—Well, nothing happened to the mine, because before the next shift went on the place was closed.

42. You have not known of cases where the men left and the place proved to be reasonably safe?—I do not know of such cases, though there may have been such.