

43. In your official capacity as check inspector, when you report a bad place is it attended to and put right? Do they take any notice of your reports?—Well, of course, I am not down in the mine to see. When we draw their attention to matters, of course they promise to fix them up. Whether they actually do so I do not know. The conditions change before we visit again.

44. Do you never make inquiries as to whether matters are remedied?—Sometimes. I may say it is a very curious thing that we do not always find that the complaints of the men are borne out. I have known occasions when complaints have been made in regard to certain sections of the mine, and when we examine them we do not find the conditions the same as those complained of. They are not found to be as bad as we were led to believe they were.

45. How long after the inspection do you make the report?—Probably the next day. What I wish to say is this: that I have known us to go round and find the conditions passable, and a couple of hours afterwards the men have had to go home.

46. *The Chairman.*] How do you account for that?—I account for it by the manipulation of the screens.

47. You might tell the Commission what you really inquire into and what you test for?—Of course, we test mostly for gas.

48. Do you take air-measurements?—We have only done so on one occasion, because we did not have an anemometer to do it with until quite recently. We certainly found sufficient air going into the mine, but it was not distributed about the faces.

49. Do you take temperatures?—No.

50. *Mr. Douggray.*] You thought the canvas doors had been manipulated to make the place all right during your visit?—Yes, something had been manipulated.

51. *The Chairman.*] But if it were gas you were after, and the canvas was manipulated to remove it—?—It was not gas on this particular occasion; it was smoke which sent the men home.

52. *Mr. Douggray.*] Smoke from what?—From fires that were in existence in the mine. And I believe this smoke finds its way into the working-places, though I have never been unfortunate enough to come across it.

53. *The Chairman.*] You have never found it?—No, care was taken about that.

54. *Mr. Douggray.*] Do you know anything about the number of accidents prevalent in this mine?—Well, I know there are a good many minor accidents in this mine, and there have been two fatal accidents since I came to Kaitangata.

55. During the last twelve months?—Yes.

56. Do the workmen here ever discuss the question of baths being erected?—The matter was discussed, and there was a ballot taken at Kaitangata to ascertain how many men working in the mine could use the baths if they were provided, and it resulted in 121 of those who voted being willing to use them, fifty-eight unfavourable to the proposal, and there were six informal votes.

57. *The Chairman.*] Out of a total of how many men employed in the mine?—I am not exactly sure, but the manager could tell you.

58. When was that ballot taken?—On the 18th August, 1911.

59. *Mr. Douggray.*] What is your personal opinion of men without any practical experience working in coal-faces?—Well, of course, in bord workings, though the men may not have had much experience on coal-faces, they may have had experience as truckers.

60. But as regards a man in charge of a face by himself?—I believe it would be better if a man had a certain amount of experience before he was given charge of a face on a dangerous field of coal.

61. It has been suggested in one place where we were that a man should have two years' experience along with another man before he got charge of a place by himself?—I would not be in favour of that being made compulsory generally, though I admit it is necessary in some places.

62. *Mr. Fletcher.*] Are you employed at the Kaitangata Colliery?—No.

63. Where have you had your experience?—The experience I have had has been in smaller mines at Alexandra and Coal Creek.

64. *The Chairman.*] And they are small mines?—Yes, comparatively small.

65. *Mr. Fletcher.*] Do they take pillars out in these mines?—They were doing so in one of the mines when I was there.

66. *The Chairman.*] In regard to your inspections: you cannot accumulate your inspections?—No, but you could go down after a week if you made it up.

67. *Mr. Fletcher.*] But you can go down twelve times in the year?—Yes, if there is a month between each inspection.

68. Then you have had no experience of pillar-workings in coal?—No, I do not feel inclined to express an opinion on that subject.

69. *Mr. Cochran.*] Did I understand you to say that you would give the check inspectors power to stop a place till the Inspector of Mines sees it?—Yes, I would suggest that.

70. Would that not have a tendency to relieve the management of responsibility?—It would have the tendency to put it on the Inspector of Mines.

71. Or on the workmen's inspector?—Well, of course, he would have to express an opinion on it.

72. Supposing you made an inspection one day and the next there was a fatal accident there, might not the management say that you were round the day before and did not stop the place?—I do not consider that would relieve the management of their responsibility. I do not think the fact of the workmen's inspector not having closed it would clear the manager in any way.

73. Not to clear him, but to relieve him to some extent of responsibility?—Well, I cannot see it in that light. I have two papers here—they are the workmen's inspectors' reports on the occasions of the two fatal accidents in the Kaitangata Mine.

74. *The Chairman.*] Were they supplied to the company?—Yes.