

20. Why not to both?—Our reason is that if the management is not aware of the nature of the report sent in by the check inspectors it would have a tendency to make him look after the conditions of the mine better than if he saw the report if it stated that matters were all right. He would not know what is coming. With the assistance of the Government Inspector the management knows when his mine is going to be examined. It seems that the inspection is too open at the present time. We also advocate an amendment in subsection (4) of section 40 of the Coal-mines Act, dealing with manholes on horse-roads. At the present time, unless there is an output of over 10 tons an hour along these roads, no manholes are necessary. In the Green Island district there is a very great danger on horse-roads on an incline. The horse pulls the boxes up the incline, and the boxes are let go. They sprag them in some instances. If a man were on the roadway he would be in danger. We consider that this subsection of the Act should apply to roads where less than 10 tons an hour are put out, and manholes should be put in every 20 yards.

21. Do I understand you to say that these manholes should be put in the horse-roads or in the part of the mine where the trucks are let go?—Well, there are dangers even in the horse-roads. A man may not have any way of escape when a horse may come along full gallop. I desire also to make reference to the matter of the supply of timber to the miners. We consider that the timber—cap-pieces, and so on—should be brought within 6 ft. of where it is to be put up. At present the management contends, according to the award, that it is sufficient if the timber is delivered to the lay-by. My reason for suggesting this is that it would prevent accidents. It is impossible sometimes for the men to push the boxes with the timber on them.

22. That is a provision in the award. Is there a provision in the Act which deals with the matter?—Yes.

23. Where?—Special Rule 11 deals with it. It says that there shall be a sufficient quantity of timber supplied to the workmen. We have no doubt on the point, but it has been a bone of contention between the management and the men.

24. You think the Act should be amended in the direction you suggest?—Yes, the timber should be delivered to within 6 ft. of where it is to be put up: that would make it clear. We also advocate that ambulance appliances should be provided at every mine for use in case of accident. Also that the miners should travel the escape-roads at least once a week to become acquainted with them. At the present time some miners do not know where the escape or the return is. I think there should be some way of compelling them to become aware of the escape-roads.

25. You want to make it compulsory upon the miners?—Upon the part of the company to see that the miners do travel these escape-roads.

26. There is nothing to prevent the men from doing so now. Would that not be a provision to apply to the miners—that they should be compelled to do so?—Well, for their own safety they should be compelled to do so.

27. But your suggestion is that there should be an obligation placed upon the management to compel the men to travel these roads. Why not make the amendment so as to compel the men themselves to do it?—I would have no objection to that. The difficulty would be that if it was left to them they would not go. I think the obligation should be placed upon the management to say to the men one day every week, "You must travel the escape to-night." It should be the duty of the management to direct it to be done. I wish also to say a few words in regard to the accident record at Green Island. Although the percentage has been low, still the risks in pillaring are tremendous. No doubt the Commission knows the conditions of such work and the effect it has upon the nerves of the men. We think that there should be better supervision with a view to the prevention of accidents in this class of work. The tonnage-rate system is responsible for more risk being taken by the men than there should be. The miners are working at so-much per ton or per box, and they try to get out as much as possible to enable them to earn a living, with the result that the work is rushed a great deal. They do not know when there is going to be an idle day, and I think that the tonnage-rate system should be abolished.

28. That is not a matter of supervision, is it? I understood you to mean that greater supervision should be exercised over the workmen?—What I mean is that the miners should exercise more care in timbering. Under the present system there is a rush to get the boxes filled, with the result that they neglect timbering which is necessary. We advocate also that there should always be two men working together in pillaring. We do not consider it right that one man should be allowed to do such work by himself. There should be a system introduced to reduce the noise at present made in pillaring and head-coal work. There may be a crowd of men put on to fill the fallen coal, and with the noise that goes on when such men are working together the men cannot hear a warning. We consider that two men are ample to work in one place if it is to be done safely. Where coaldust accumulates in a mine we advocate that it should be removed. I do not know whether there is a provision in the Act to deal with this matter, but it is not attended to in the mines in the Green Island district. We are of opinion that cut-throughs should be put in at least every 60 ft. In regard to the matter of ventilation, we consider that where the miners are working in bords running from heading to heading, even 60 ft. at times is too far for the ventilation to sweep the face all the time. It is necessary to put brattice in.

29. What distance is there between stentons on your field?—The distance varies; it is sometimes 20 yards and sometimes 10 yards.

30. But that is within the maximum you suggest?—Yes, of course, it is in some cases; but my idea is to try to get the Act amended so that it should be made imperative.

31. You think a uniform standard distance should be specified in the Act. Supposing you had a really bad place, which required the stentons to be put through at shorter distances, would there not be a danger of the manager sticking to the standard to the detriment of the place?—That is so; but my idea in specifying the distance is that bratticing is only a temporary method of ventilation. If they were continually carrying on bratticing there would always be a certain amount of leakage, and if that went on for a great distance the air would get worse. There should be a stipulated distance for cut-throughs.