

32. Have you had any experience of the dangers arising from shot-firing?—Yes, that is a matter I overlooked. We consider that proper appliances should be supplied to the miners, and also tamping. I do not know whether there is provision in the Act for that, but there ought to be. A miner may use tamping which is not fit for use. In pillaring it is different, because you can always get an ample supply from the fall.

33. You do not fire a great many shots in coal-mining: what is the most you fire at a time?—Three is about the maximum, but generally only one is fired.

34. And as to misfires?—If we have a misfire we are withdrawn, and we do not go back.

35. How long is it before you go back?—Four hours generally.

36. What is a safe time?—Not to go back that shift.

37. Nothing less than that?—I should say, four hours.

38. *Mr. Dowgray.*] You stated that the fan should be kept going when the men are at work: is that not the custom in Green Island?—The custom in the mine where I am working is for the fan to be kept going while the men are on day shift, but when night shifts are at work the fan has been stopped. I have heard of instances where the fan has not been going for half a day's work.

39. What is the present custom in regard to starting the fan in the morning: when does it start?—A quarter or half an hour, or sometimes an hour, before the men.

40. Do you feel any bad effects as a result of the fan not being always kept going?—Yes, sometimes.

41. You recommend that where fans are in use they should be kept going all the time?—Yes.

42. You suggested that the airways should be at least 5 ft. by 6 ft.: what is the custom now?—In some places they are 5 ft. by 6 ft., but in many cases they are only 2 ft. or 3 ft. square, and in those places you have to crawl.

43. You stated, in reply to the Chairman, that in your opinion the air should sweep round the working-faces: do you understand that the Act lays down a minimum of 150 cubic feet per man per minute, and more if necessary?—Yes.

44. Are we to understand that there is not 150 ft. of air provided at the working-faces?—I am certain of it in some instances.

45. *The Chairman.*] Have you seen any air-measurements taken?—No.

46. *Mr. Dowgray.*] Are we to understand that the 150 ft. is not circulating round the faces, as required by the Act?—No. I read the Act that way, but some are of opinion that so long as the required quantity of air is running through the mine it is sufficient. The Act should be amended to make it clear.

47. You also suggested that subsection (4) of section 40 should be altered so as to include manholes on horse-roads?—Yes, they are generally, but there is less danger there, because in a drive, for instance, there is room for a box to pass.

48. It would be sufficient for the 10-tons-an-hour limit to be struck out?—Yes, that would meet the case.

49. And "20 yards" should be substituted for "100 yards"?—Yes.

50. You told us that the custom here is to deliver timber at the lay-by and not at the working-places?—Yes.

51. According to my reading of Special Rule 2 it is quite clear that the timber should be delivered at the men's places?—Yes, I think so, too. But the Mines Department does not agree; they consider that it is subject to the provision of the award. Previous to this award it was the custom for the company to do all the timbering, but we contend that the Coal-mines Act overrides all awards.

52. *The Chairman.*] What does the award say?—That "the company shall cut all timber to the lengths required by the miners, and deliver the same to the miners." That is the reading of the award.

53. *Mr. Dowgray.*] I noticed that in one mine we visited yesterday the trucking-road is very low: is that not a source of danger to the men when retreating out of it?—Yes, certainly, it is one of the most dangerous positions that a man can be placed in to have the boxes in behind him, and no way to retreat either at the side or over the top. He is depending upon his strength to be able to push the boxes out of the way. I contend that the road should be wide enough to enable a man to get past a box. They are practically blocked in.

54. Would you suggest a height for trucking-roads?—Yes, 5 ft. or 6 ft.

55. You stated that there was a feeling abroad amongst the miners that the management always knows when the Inspector is going to visit the mine. Can you give us any reason why you think that?—I cannot give you any proof, but that is the common talk.

56. *The Chairman.*] Do you know personally when he is coming?—No, but we can surmise. As far as the miners at Green Island are concerned, the Inspector of Mines is the last person with whom they would lodge a complaint. They are under the impression that they cannot rely upon the secrecy of correspondence with him. That is why I advocate surprise visits. We want more visits, and if it is too much for the Inspector to do more Inspectors should be appointed, and they should have greater powers.

57. You consider that the Inspectors should have increased powers?—Yes.

58. In which direction?—They should have the power to enter a mine at any time, and the check inspectors should have that power also. At present they can only go into the mine once a month, and we consider they should be allowed to go down whenever they think there is any laxity on the part of the management or any danger. This applies to the check inspectors and the Government Inspectors.

59. *Mr. Dowgray.*] But the Government Inspector has the power to enter a mine at any time, has he not?—No, not in my opinion.

60. You are in favour of the workmen's inspectors having more access to the mines?—Yes, to prevent accident, and to see to the ventilation.