

51. If you ask for such drastic powers, the check inspectors should satisfy somebody that they are duly qualified—say, the Inspector of Mines—or be required to pass an examination?—Well, at the present time they could call in the Inspector of Mines before prosecuting.

52. Yes, but you are asking for greater powers for the check inspectors than even the Inspectors of Mines have?—Yes; but we want these conditions altered.

53. Have you anything to suggest as to enlarging the powers of the Inspectors of Mines on these lines?—I do not think so.

54. Would it not be better, if the check inspector finds that his report is not attended to, to bring the matter before the Inspector of Mines, and for the Inspector of Mines to have the power to prosecute?—Well, that would cover it.

55. There is a recommendation before the Commission that in certain cases power be given to the Inspector of Mines to prosecute on his own initiative: would not that meet your case?—Yes, that would cover it.

56. If the check inspector called in the Inspector of Mines to go with him, and for the Inspector of Mines to have power to prosecute if he found the check inspector's report correct?—Yes. I also want to recommend that blocks be placed on jig-heads, and bells on knockers, and that an anchor-chain be provided.

57. And what have you to say about the sanitary arrangements in mines?—Yes, I would like to recommend that there should be a truck placed in each section of the mine, together with cinders or coal-slack, and when the men go there they should put it into the truck before leaving the place, and the truck should be taken out at certain times.

58. *Mr. Dowgray.*] What objection have you to the men using the ordinary sanitary pans?—In these mines we have a floating population, and you do not know who is working in the mine with you, and I do not think it is advisable to use the pan after everybody else has been using it.

59. In the event of the companies being compelled to adopt a system such as you have just outlined, would you be in favour of the men being prosecuted if they did not use it?—Certainly.

60. Could you suggest a fine?—Yes, I certainly would fine them not less than 10s.

61. Would that be sufficient?—I think so.

62. In regard to workmen's inspectors, what is your opinion as to their being tied down to visiting the mine only once a month, as the law stands at present?—I would like to say that they should be allowed to go round at any time, if there were any complaints.

63. In reply to the Chairman, did I understand you to say that you were in favour of workmen's inspectors having the power to prosecute, or simply to stop the place until it was seen by the Government Inspector?—To stop the place in the meantime.

64. You are aware that the present Coal-mines Act says that 150 ft. of air is to be supplied to each man?—Well, I could not say that to my own knowledge it says so clearly—I was of the opinion that it means in the intake.

65. That is the minimum, to be increased by the Inspector of Mines at any time?—Yes.

66. Do you think the Act should be made clearer, so that that amount shall be distributed to each man at the face?—Yes.

67. Is it not the custom in your mine to have bells on these jigs?—At the present time there are bells and knockers on some, but not on all. It should be made compulsory that there should be stop-blocks and bells or knockers.

68. When speaking of the anchor-chain you referred to the face-jig?—Yes.

ARTHUR HARRIS sworn and examined. (No. 39.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—A miner.

2. With how many years' experience?—Twenty.

3. Where?—At Denniston, Kaitangata, Blackball, and Huntly.

4. What mine are you working in now?—The Stockton.

5. How long have you been there?—Three years.

6. Do you hold any position in the mine?—No.

7. Have you any position in any union?—Yes, I am a check inspector.

8. Are you a member of the executive of the union?—No, simply a member, and check inspector.

9. You have heard the evidence of the previous witness?—Yes.

10. Can you corroborate his evidence on the matters he has brought forward?—Yes.

11. Have you anything further to add?—No.

12. You say you are a check inspector: what have you to say with regard to the experience which should be required of check inspectors—assuming that you are asking for further powers?—Well, I think the check inspectors should have the power, perhaps not to prosecute, but if he thinks the place bad, to stop it.

13. But what experience do you consider check inspectors should have before getting those powers?—They should have four or five years' experience at a working-face.

14. Would four or five years' experience at a working-face give a man sufficient experience of gases, the taking of temperatures, the detection of gases, and general conditions, to justify him in stopping a place?—Of course, a man would know well enough if he had four or five years' experience in a mine.

15. You think four or five years in a working-face would enable him to determine the presence of injurious gases?—I think so.

16. Have you anything further to add to the recommendations of the previous witness?—No.