

14. What is the average number of men they follow?—I do not know. Some have as high as twelve pairs, but they have assistance.

15. Do you know how many coal-hewers there are in that section?—Between sixty and seventy pairs of men.

16. Are there as many on the day shift as on the night shift?—There is only the one section double-shifted, the Ironbridge.

17. There are twelve deputies?—Yes.

18. *Mr. Dowgray.*] I believe you got your certificate for service?—Yes.

19. Did the getting of that ticket make you a better man than you were before?—No.

20. In your opinion, with the examination for deputies, are you getting a better class of men as deputies?—Well, the result is not to be seen yet. We have still the old hands on.

21. Do you not know the result in other collieries?—It would be very hard to say.

22. Your colleague suggested that they should not be granted a ticket under twenty-five: are you aware that there are men getting tickets under twenty-five?—The idea is to prevent them from getting tickets before they are twenty-five.

23. Under the present law as to the examination, are you getting the best men?—The examination is easy now.

24. If the examination were made stiffer, would you be in favour of men at present holding service certificates passing the examination?—Yes, I think it helps a man to go up for an examination, though there is often a practical man who lacks the educational ability to qualify for a ticket.

25. Your colleague said he was going by the latest Coal-mines Act in the Old Country: are you sure that that Act is passed yet?—I do not know; it was before the House.

26. *Mr. Reed.*] In connection with this examination for underviewers and deputies, do you not think, if the examination were made harder, it might exclude some good practical men who have not much education?—Well, everything is changing nowadays. The old conditions are passing away, and the newer conditions with education are coming to the front. With education it is necessary for everybody to keep up with the times.

27. Supposing we had had a stiff examination at the start, and it had resulted in many men failing, what would the companies have done for deputies?—It would have been very difficult for them.

28. Do the deputies realize that that was the reason for making the examination easy?—Yes, I think so; it was known.

29. To permit the mines to continue working?—Yes.

30. Are you aware that that section of the Act came into operation when none of the deputies had certificates?—I am not sure on that point. I thought the time was extended so that the men might have time to get certificates.

31. Would you be in favour of the examination being made harder now?—Well, I look at it from this point of view: if you are going to require the men to sit for a ticket it is no use making it a farce.

32. Would you be in favour of the men being tested in the presence of gas?—Yes, I think that is a necessary qualification—that the men should have the knowledge.

33. How do you think it ought to be arranged in places where there are no gaseous mines?—They could practice with artificial gas.

34. Would the deputies' association approve of the standard of the examination being raised?—I think so, on the whole. I do not know as to the question of these service men having to pass the examination. I do not think they would be able to study to go in for the examination. I am afraid it would be asking rather much of them.

35. *Mr. Dowgray.*] Did your union discuss this matter from the point of view of raising the status of the deputies or making it a monopoly?—To raise the status.

36. There would not be anything in the way of all the others being required to qualify to pass the examination?—Except from the educational standpoint.

37. If the standard of the examination were raised, say, this year, would there not be a danger of the managers taking only those men who had the better tickets to your detriment?—I do not know.

EDMUND POWER sworn and examined. (No. 54.)

1. *The Chairmen.*] What are you?—An engine-driver.

2. With how many years' experience?—About twenty-four, engine-driving and firing.

3. What matters do you wish to bring before the Commission?—The matter of alterations in the boiler-sheds. We have boilers about 12 ft. high on the top and somewhere about 8 ft. apart, and we have only a 6 in. plank to go across. Also, on the front of the boilers it is about 12 ft. high, and if you have any repairs to make you have to stand on a ladder. It is very awkward, and we think it unsafe. There should be platforms from boiler to boiler, and a grating so as to meet in the centre and capable of being turned back when you do not want to use it. And at the fan in the Cascade section you have to climb up a ladder 5 ft. or 6 ft. high. It is very easy to slip, because everything is greasy. I think there should be a staging there.

4. *Mr. Reed.*] As regards the boilers, you say they are dangerous: what is the Inspector of boilers doing to allow that?—Well, the Inspector crosses those 6 in. planks and climbs the ladders annually, and nothing has been done.

5. Has the Inspector of boilers certified everything correct?—Well, he examines the boilers.

6. How long does he spend inspecting your boilers here?—About an hour or an hour and a half.

7. Do you carry out the hydraulic test?—Yes, under the supervision of our engineer.

8. At what pressure?—Our working-pressure is 120 lb., and they are tested up to 240 lb.—double the working-pressure.