

men were breaking away a bord on one side and two on the other side of the sheet, and somehow the whole of the ground collapsed. We contend that had a chain jig not been in use there the men would have heard the ground moving, but with the chain jig in motion they could not hear anything. I may say that the fall took place directly after the truck arrived at the top. The accident could not be traced directly to the use of the jig, but we contend that it was the indirect result of its use. Then, there have been innumerable accidents caused through men, when pulling up the jigs, getting their fingers caught between the chain and the wheel.

36. What other method do you use besides the chain?—There are ropes and brakes in some places, and these should be used in all jigs except in face-jigs. Where a chain is used an anchor chain should be used in addition.

37. How do the two systems compare for vibration?—There is more vibration with the chain jig. On most of the jigs there is no wheel. A couple of fish-plates are put on a prop and the chain runs round that, and that affects the roof. Allen and Nicholson were injured by a fall brought down in that way in No. 2 mine.

38. What does the rope run through in a rope jig?—It runs round a wheel. Then, we contend that in every coal-mining district there should be a depot, as there is at Home, for the testing of fire-fighting appliances. Such a depot should be established here, so that if a fire does take place the men would be ready to fight it, and so save a great number of lives perhaps. Then, we think the workmen's inspectors should have more powers than they have at the present time. At any rate, where a place is considered dangerous he should have the power to suspend operations until the Inspector of Mines can visit the scene.

39. What is the practice here in regard to inspections by workmen's inspectors?—The workmen's inspector goes round the mine, accompanied by the mine-manager, and reports anything which is dangerous.

40. How often do they go round?—Once a month, unless something unforeseen turns up. If a man complains a special visit is made.

41. There have been representations made to us on this subject of the extension of the powers of workmen's inspectors. It has been suggested that if a check inspector wishes the power to stop a place he should pass some examination, or show that he is qualified to express an opinion upon the question—such an examination, for instance, as a deputy is required to pass. Have you anything to say as to that?—I do not think it would raise the status of the workmen's inspector if he had to pass an examination. As far as I can learn, the passing of the examination has not raised the status of the deputy. The main point is as to whether a man is a practical miner, and I do not think the miners will ever put in a man as a workmen's inspector unless he is practical. Then, we contend that another cause of accident is the speeding-up process. There is no doubt that the present system of coal-getting—the contract system—is responsible to a certain extent for a great number of accidents, because the men take risks in order to earn a big wage which they ought not to take, and we contend that it will be almost an impossibility to prevent the accidents until such time as the system is done away with and the wage system introduced. We also recommend that in the opening up of all new coal-mines and winning-places should be taken to the boundary before commencing bord-and-pillar work. There is no doubt that a large number of accidents are the result of the companies trying to put coal on the market at an early date.

42. *Mr. Dowgray.*] In connection with the bath question, you said you were in favour of the compulsory use of baths by the miners?—Yes.

43. Have the whole of the miners agreed to that?—No.

44. How would you set about finding out whether the baths should be installed or not? Would you take a ballot of the men?—Yes, decidedly.

45. And if the men decided in favour of the baths you would make it compulsory?—Yes.

46. Then you do not agree that it should be left optional whether the men use them or not?—I quite agree that in some cases a certain allowance should be made, because we know that some men have a decided objection to stripping in front of others through some affliction. I do not think it should be made altogether compulsory, but where men endeavour to avoid the use of the bath simply because of their lack of cleanliness it should be made compulsory.

47. Do you not think that the use of the baths would become almost universal once they were erected?—Yes.

48. Do you suggest that the showers should be covered in?—Yes.

49. You stated, in reply to the Chairman, that the bords sometimes run into one another: are the workmen to blame for that, or the management?—The management.

50. *The Chairman.*] In what way?—Because the management should know by the plans the quantity of coal there is, and the distance between the bords. If the bords were driven by sight, and not in a haphazard way, that would not occur.

51. *Mr. Dowgray.*] Is it not a fact that the management sometimes alters your course?—Yes.

52. And the workmen are not always to blame?—No.

53. The chain jigs you referred to are the jigs away from the face?—Yes. These should be wire ropes instead of chains.

54. And all face-jigs should have anchor chains?—Yes.

55. In connection with check inspections, do you agree that these should be made only once a month? Here you have no difficulty in making more frequent inspections if necessary, but in other places they have?—I think the check inspector should have the power to examine the mine at any time. We have no difficulty here in regard to that matter.

56. *The Chairman.*] There has been a suggestion made that the Act should be amended to enable the Inspector of Mines to give the workmen's inspector authority in writing to inspect a mine more frequently than once a month, and for that authority to remain in force as long as the Inspector of Mines considered it necessary?—That might suit us in some cases, but in others it might be against us.