

the examination of deputies should be held once in each year at the same time as the manager's examination, and be advertised in the same manner, and all candidates should be of the age of twenty-five and must have had at least five years' experience in a coal-mine, of which three years should be at the coal-face. We consider that a deputy is not capable of supervising every man unless he has had three years at the coal-face.

5. You have heard the suggestions made on behalf of the miners as to the powers of check inspectors: from your experience of check inspectors, have you anything to say as to the qualification of a check inspector to stop a place?—If I made any statement on that point it would not be made on behalf of my union, but a personal one, and I prefer not to make any such statement.

6. Can you express an opinion as to the suggestion that the check inspectors should pass an examination?—Well, I have heard the statement made here that all the check inspectors are the most competent men that can be found in a mine. I say that is not so. I have been a check inspector myself, and I have known check inspectors who have not been capable of taking a reading of the air. They were really duffers.

7. What do you think about the examination: do you think it would be a reasonable thing to ask?—Well, I think so, because if you are going to give a check inspector the power to stop a place he should qualify himself in some way. There are many in this mine who are very erratic; they would stop anything.

8. *Mr. Reed.*] About those deputy's examinations, did you get a service certificate or a certificate of competency?—A certificate of competency.

9. You passed the examination?—Yes.

10. Who examined you?—Mr. Marshall.

11. Do you think that examination is difficult enough?—No, it is too easy.

12. It was the first examination you passed?—Yes, one of the first. I say right here it is a farce.

13. Deputies were wanted at that time—it was illegal to work without certificated men?—I wish to say that there are a lot of men who want to sit for the examination, but no advertisement has appeared, and there is no one to apply to.

14. Have you written to the Secretary of the Board?—No.

15. As to the check inspectors, do they take air-measurements?—Yes, I did when I was a check inspector at Blackball.

16. Do the check inspectors here use the anemometer?—Yes, they carry them.

17. Have you seen them use one?—No.

18. *Mr. Dowgray.*] How long have you been a deputy here?—Nine months.

19. In Blackball how long had you the anemometer?—It was the property of the union. I do not know how long they had it.

20. They had it while you were check inspector?—Yes.

21. You say you are in favour of the standard of the examination being raised and the age-limit fixed?—Yes, at twenty-five, and the men to have three years at the coal-face.

22. Where were you a check inspector before at Blackball?—Nowhere.

23. And you said that some check inspectors were mere freaks?—Yes.

24. *Mr. Parry.*] Did you say that you think check inspectors should pass a certain examination before being allowed to take up their duties?—Yes.

25. Do you know anything about taking temperatures?—No, I have never taken them, except a few in Blackball with the ordinary thermometer.

26. Do you know the difference between the two bulbs?—I have seen them, but I do not care to go into that question.

27. You said that some of these check inspectors were so erratic that they would stop any place?—Yes.

28. Did you ever see a place stopped by them in this mine?—They have not the power to stop a place. I judge from hearing their views.

29. So that you do not know whether they would have stopped it at all?—That is my opinion.

FREDERICK ERNEST FOOT sworn and examined. (No. 53.)

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

2. How many years' mining experience have you had?—Twelve years in coal-mines, and thirteen years in alluvial mines.

3. How long have you held a certificate?—I have a service certificate, and have been four years a deputy.

4. What matters do you wish to bring before the Commission: do you corroborate what has been said by the last witness?—Yes.

5. Have you anything to add?—I think the deputies should have their duties confined to looking after the men. At times there is a great deal of other work to be done, and you have to do that between times.

6. *Mr. Fletcher.*] Which mine are you deputy in?—The Ironbridge.

7. How many deputies are there there?—I cannot tell you. About a dozen, I think.

8. Which section are you in?—No. 2 section at present.

9. How many men are there in that section—hewers?—About ten singles on day shift, and ten on the night shift.

10. Are you the only deputy?—There is also a deputy for the night shift.

11. Is there any assistance?—No.

12. Do you know how many men the deputies follow in the other sections of the mine?—One man would follow about five pairs and a half.

13. How many men are under your charge in a shift?—Ten colliers and the truckers.