

- (5.) That it be made compulsory for the deputy or fireman who examines the mine, before the first shift starts, to remain at a convenient station near the entrance of the mine, in order that each man entering the mine may have an opportunity of obtaining a verbal report as to the condition of his place, and that each man shall obtain such information from the deputy before proceeding to his work.
- (6.) (a.) That a coal-miner shall have experience in coal-hewing and timbering before he has charge of a place, and that the period of such experience be two years and a half underground, of which six months shall be at the face with an experienced miner. (b.) That the minimum age at which a miner shall be put in charge of a place be twenty-one years.

A great deal of evidence has been tendered on the above subject of an experienced miner getting charge of a place where, quite apart from the danger to the whole mine if it be a fiery one, on his knowledge of mining and timbering not only his own life but that of others must largely depend.

- (7.) That the workmen's inspectors have authority to inspect the mine once in every fortnight, and, in addition thereto, that they have authority to do so at all reasonable times, on receiving notice from any two miners that the mine, or any part thereof, is by them considered dangerous, the workmen's inspector to notify the mine-manager, in writing, of the proposed inspection; that, if the workmen's inspector is of opinion that any such mine or part thereof is dangerous, he shall forthwith record the same in a book kept at the mine office for the purpose, and he shall request the mine-manager to stop work at the place and withdraw all men therefrom, and discontinue or rectify any dangerous practice. If the manager refuses to withdraw the men, or fails for an unreasonable time to do so, or remedy the defect, if any, the workmen's inspector may apply to the Inspector of Mines to withdraw the men, or to have the dangerous practice discontinued; that if it is proved to the satisfaction of the Court that the place was dangerous at the time of the workmen's inspection, or that a dangerous practice existed, and that the manager failed without reasonable excuse to comply with the request of the workmen's inspector, he shall be deemed guilty of an offence under the Act; that the manager shall forward without delay a copy of such workmen's inspector's report to the Inspector of Mines.

The above provision may meet urgent cases during the absence of the Inspector of Mines from the district.

2. MINING.

(i.) *Coal-mining.*

The question of the height of pillar-workings involves the earning-power of the men and the cost of winning the coal, but the chief consideration is the safety of the men. High pillar-working has been such a fruitful source of accident in many mines owing to the miner being unable to conveniently sound the roof that we recommend—

- (1.) That the lifts in pillar-workings be restricted to 10 ft. in height, and the Inspector of Mines to have power to determine the height at which the remaining coal shall be taken out, subject to the right of appeal to the Warden (or the Stipendiary Magistrate in districts where there is no Warden) and the Inspecting Engineer of Mines; if they fail to agree, the matter to be referred to the Minister of Mines, whose decision shall be final.