

be slightly burned ought to be reported under that section?—Yes, if a person is burned, necessitating his absence from work for two or three weeks, I say it is a serious injury, and it ought to be reported to the Minister.

587. *The Chairman.*] How can a manager know how long a man is going to be off work when he is first injured?—What appears to be a minor accident may become a serious injury.

588. Should the report be sent in three weeks later?—No, sir, at once.

589. So that the Inspector may come and see the place immediately after the accident?—Yes, and to enable remedies to be taken, if necessary.

590. *Mr. Napier.*] It may be that the Inspector is travelling at the time?—Nevertheless a notification of such accident should be sent to his office, even if it was only a week that the man was off work.

591. I am dealing with section 62. You read it, and you adhere to your statement that you believe accidents of the kind referred to, where those men were burnt, should have been reported as serious accidents under that section?—I call them serious injuries, not minor ones.

592. Would you tell us how long a man would require to be away from his work as the result of a burn in order to justify you in reporting under section 62?—You are asking me as if I were a mine-manager. If so, I would report it by telegram at once, even if it were only a mild case of burning.

593. Even if the man had not to stay away from his work?—I would notify it at once, as the conditions were serious.

594. Irrespective of the nature of the burn?—Absolutely.

595. Subsection (5) of section 62 says that “the part of the mine where the accident occurred shall not be interfered with until inspected by the Inspector, or by some other person appointed for the purpose by the Minister, or by the Coroner’s jury, unless with the view of saving life or preventing further injuries.” Does not that indicate that the injury contemplated by the section is a very serious injury?—No, not a very serious injury.

596. Then when a slight burn is sustained, and the man is not off work any time, you believe that the mine should be immediately sealed up and work stopped?—I did not say anything of the kind, and I do not believe it.

597. Do you suggest that the part of the mine where the injury happened, however slight, should be closed up and work discontinued?—I say if an ignition of gas occurs in a part of a mine, by which a man is burned, the Inspector should be immediately notified.

598. However slight the burn or ignition may be?—Yes.

599. And the work stopped?—It is only one working-place, perhaps.

600. And you think the part of the mine where the burn occurs should be closed up until the Inspector comes, and work stopped?—I said that place should be discontinued until the Inspector saw it.

601. Irrespective of the gas emitted?—Yes. The Inspector should be notified immediately, also the Department, because most serious conditions may exist.

602. Wherever an explosion of gas occurs, however slight, the most dangerous conditions exist?—Yes; when it becomes ignited in a dusty mine.

603. Do not the conditions exist prior to the ignition?—Some of the conditions do.

604. It only wants ignition?—It is dangerous.

605. Then you say that it was unnecessary and unmeaning for the Legislature to put the word “serious” before the word “injury” in section 62?—I say that the wording is bad. I would make it so that any accident by which men are burned by gas should be notified to the Inspector.

606. And you are of opinion that all the sections which follow should be amended accordingly?—Yes, certainly.

607. Would you consider that the manager was doing something wrong if he took a different view from you as to the meaning of that section, so far as the extent of the injury was concerned?—If he were a certificated manager, and did not report it, then I would consider him failing in his duty and concealing something.

608. Irrespective of the present wording of the Act?—Absolutely, because we are not bound by the words of an obsolete statute where human life is concerned. I am referring to the manager—the manager is not bound by the words of an obsolete statute where human life is concerned.

609. He is bound by what?—By his training, and his conscience, and his duty.

610. We are trying to find out what is his duty, and I am suggesting it is his duty to carry out the statute?—He owes something to humanity and the men who are employed under him.

611. Then the statute has no regard for humanity?—Who said that? I say the statute has regard for humanity; but I do not think it has a complete or perfect regard.

612. You consider that the manager should set up his own standard of his duty outside the Act?—Not the standard of his duty. He must not conceal anything. The intention of Parliament is for managers to act in the interest of human life; but it is impossible for Parliament always to put those words down in black and white.

613. If it is not down in black and white, how is a manager to know what is the intention of Parliament?—I am not speaking of the manager determining the intention of Parliament, but referring to the necessity for him to use his discretion and prudence in connection with these matters.

614. But the Department has not told him to do anything except what is in the Act?—No, I do not think the Department has told him, because they have not power to do so.

615. Do you not believe that the public and the miners employed in these mines have to be told, assuming that some protection was afforded to the miners by the activities of the Mines Department?—I do not know what they have assumed.

616. Did it ever occur to you as a responsible officer of the Department—or an irresponsible one—that the Department is responsible for the safety of coal-mines?—The responsibility of seeing the