

34. May I draw you attention to clause 6—official inquiries in case of accident. You are aware that it is proposed to set up a Court to deal with people who hold certificates, a Court which is to consist of a Warden sitting with two Assessors appointed by him, one of whom shall be the holder of a first-class mine-manager's certificate, and the other an experienced miner working in some mine other than that in which the accident occurred.

35. That Court has the right to disqualify a person by cancelling his certificate. Would you be satisfied that a tribunal so constituted should have the power to take away your certificate?—I think that the miner should have some further qualifications.

36. It means that the Assessor, who is a first-class mine-manager, might disagree with the other two members of the Court, and they might deprive you of your certificate. Would such a Court satisfy you?—If the miner were a man with some qualifications and standing, I think I would be prepared to abide by the decision of the Court.

37. Do you think that the miner should have some definite qualification?—Yes, he should be able to produce evidence of his *bona fides* as an experienced miner. We have had men come here and say they were experienced miners on the coal, and it has afterwards come out that they had never been underground before. A man of that description might be put on such a tribunal—some loquacious individual.

38. Have you considered the question of the number of men to be employed in a ventilating district as provided by subclause (d) of clause 7?—Yes.

39. It says, "The total number of men ordinarily employed in any ventilating district shall not without the consent in writing of the Inspector exceed fifty at any one time, and in no case shall the number exceed seventy." Have you anything to say as to that?—I consider the minimum should be seventy.

40. You consider that fifty is too small?—Yes, you would probably have to cut up your air-currents, and you would not get sufficient volume to carry away your smoke readily.

41. Now, regarding paragraph B of subclause (j) of clause 46B, you will notice that it is proposed that the workmen's inspections may take place once in every fortnight?—I think once a month is quite frequent enough for a general examination of a mine. They have the right, if any special circumstances arises, to make extra inspections.

42. Regarding paragraph (e) of the same subclause, you see the workmen's inspectors shall report within twenty-four hours of the making of their inspection?—They should be required to report at once—it should be done immediately they leave the mine, in the same way as the officials' reports have to be written immediately the examination is completed.

43. You think the check inspectors should not be allowed any time to discuss their inspection before reporting?—That is so.

44. Clause 8 (1) (a) provides for the amendment of Special Rule 4 under the Act by adding the words "No timber shall be withdrawn except by lever and chain, or by blasting"; in your opinion is that a proper provision?—If made to apply to pillar-workings it is a desirable thing.

45. Is it practicable?—Is there not a difficulty in regard to taking away your timbers?—As far as I know, it is taken from the English Act; if that is so, and they work to it there, I have no objection to it.

46. Under clause 9 of the Bill there is to be set up a committee on additional rules, to consist of the Inspector of Mines, the mine-manager, and a representative of the workmen: do you think the Inspector should act on that committee and be the chairman of it?—No, I do not agree with the setting-up of the committee for that purpose at all.

47. You do not think there should be any such committee?—That is my idea. I think it is making the manager subservient to the workers. It is depriving him of all power, and yet he has to take the responsibility under the Act.

48. Supposing the committee is set up, what do you say about the Inspector being the chairman of it and a member of it: do you think that is a proper position to put the Inspector in?—It is making him shoulder the responsibility of the working of the mine instead of the manager. I do not think it is a proper position to put him in. The Inspector should only be required to see that the Act is observed.

49. Will you now turn to the schedule to the Bill. Rule No. 3 says, "A backstay or trailer shall be attached to each ascending tub, or set of tubs, on every inclined haulage-road where mechanical haulage other than endless rope and chain is used." Does that strike you as practicable? It is the empty tub that is to have the backstay: how would that apply in a jig?—I think it is a rather useless provision on a face jig.

50. Rule 57A says, "Only wire ropes shall be used for haulage purposes on jigs, except on the face section, where chains may be used. Anchor chains shall be used on all face jigs"?—I do not understand that quite. If it is to secure the chain until the second skip is attached to it it is reasonable.

51. But the trailer?—Well, the trailer on the face jig is a useless provision.

52. *Mr. Brown.*] Section 3 does not specially mention jigs, but still it is quite possible it is meant to refer to jigs?—I do not see any objection to using a trailer on a set of skips of that description. I take it that it applies to cases where you are running empties in by gravity. I do not think it is an unreasonable provision at all.

53. There has been a suggestion made in regard to the qualifications of Inspectors of Mines—that no man should be appointed an Inspector of Coal-mines who has not qualified for a mine-manager's certificate by examination: do you agree with that statement?—Yes, I do. I think all Inspectors should be men of the greatest eminence in the coal-mining industry in the country, so that we can look up to them for advice.