

4. After consultation with you it was decided not to print the evidence, mainly on account of its confidential nature.

5. At the request of the workers' representatives the Board inspected the working-places and labour conditions generally in the following mines: Taupiri, Rotowaro, Pukemiro, Waipa, Nightcaps, Kaitangata, Point Elizabeth, Blackball, Denniston, and Millerton.

6. The housing-accommodation of mine workers was also inspected generally by the members of the Board in the coal-mining districts visited, but as a detailed inspection was deemed necessary the Board appointed Mr. S. Hurst Seager, architect, of Christchurch, to make a special inspection. The result of this is dealt with later in this report.

The mass of data accumulated in the inquiry was enormous and concerned every detail of the producing and distributing industries. The selection of facts and the generalizations necessary to answer the questions of the order of reference have been arranged, according to logical division of subjects, in the eight chapters of the report.

The first chapter is a brief summary or survey of the chief outstanding features of the coal industry of the Dominion, providing certain information necessary for those with no special technical knowledge of the industry who would make use of the body of the report, and stating a few general principles that should assist in its interpretation—in general depicting the background and atmosphere of the main subject. The second chapter examines and analyses the costs of mining coal, and traces and endeavours to account for the changes in these during the period under review—viz., since 1913-14. The third does the same in respect of the distribution of coal. In the fourth an attempt is made to assess the profits that have been made in the coal business, both mining and dealing, and to interpret their changes. A similar problem in regard to the earnings of mine workers is attacked in Chapter V, whilst the succeeding chapters, VI and VII, are devoted to similar treatments of the cost-of-living and housing and general social conditions on the mining fields. The final chapter discusses the possibility of improvement at all points in the industry and embodies the chief recommendations of the Board.

In order to facilitate reference to the more important findings and recommendations of the report there is included in Chapter VIII an abstract or synopsis, divided according to the numbered subjects in the order of reference. A short index and a contents summary are also attached. The most important findings of the inquiry are distinguished in the body of the report by means of italic type.

NOTE.—In all places where the information given was confidential, mines or companies are indicated not by name but by letter or number. Each mine or company is not indicated by the same letter or number throughout the report—i.e., in one context "A" may indicate a particular mine and in another context a different mine.

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