

- (b) *Advance Working and Ventilation Plans.*—In our opinion it would assist the management and contribute to the future safety of the mine and its methodical development if proposals for its future development and ventilation were submitted in advance to the Inspector of Mines for his approval and advice.
- (c) *Emergency Exit.*—The present emergency exit by way of the mouth of No. 1 Mine is by a circuitous route, and involves climbing several ladderways and steep inclines at various points. In the event of explosion or fire, men suffering from the effect of gas poisoning or blinded by smoke would find great difficulty in making their way out of the mine by this route. We understand that a shorter and more practicable route is to be provided by an incline shaft to be constructed in the vicinity of the vertical shaft C. We recommend that this work be put in hand at once. We also recommend that all men working underground be required at least once during each quarter to pass in or out of the mine through the return airway or second outlet, so as to become acquainted with it.

Subject to the comments which we have made in reference to the above three subjects (a), (b), and (c), and to what we have said earlier in this report on the irregularities in shot-firing and the preparation of shots and issue of detonators, the mine appears to have been satisfactorily managed.

### 13. INSPECTION OF THE MINE.

(a) *By the Inspectors of the Mines Department.*—The Inspector of Mines for the district appears to have drawn the attention of the management from time to time to all or nearly all the matters on which we have had occasion to comment, in so far as they came to his knowledge. He would be much assisted in his duties by the supply to him of the advance plan of proposed developments as recommended elsewhere. We consider his inspection to have been thorough and efficient. The Chief Inspector has also shown by his communications his full apprehension of the dangers in the mine, and we are satisfied that he has done all in his power to remedy the defects brought to his notice by the District Inspector and by his own observations.

(b) *By the Workmen's Inspectors.*—This was done with reasonable frequency, though not as often as the law allows. The Miners' Union representative pointed out that the workmen's inspectors were unable to take full advantage of the law by reason of the heavy expense entailed to them. The Inspector for the district was very appreciative of the assistance given to the workmen's inspectors.

### 14. RESCUE BRIGADES AND APPARATUS.

The evidence has been somewhat conflicting as to whether a trained rescue brigade would have saved lives or not. We are satisfied that it would be better to be without a brigade than to have an inefficient one.

We would strongly recommend that the Mines Department obtain the latest information on rescue brigades and apparatus, and confer with representatives of the Coal-mine Owners' Association and the United Mine Workers with a view to discussing the whole question as to the benefits derived by establishing rescue brigades and providing apparatus in the chief coal-mining centres.

A valuable offer has been made by the Southland Coal-mine Owners' Association to erect a properly equipped first-aid station and lecture-room and to provide a lecturer, in order that there may be available in cases of emergency a body of men trained in rescue work and possessing the requisite local knowledge.

### 15. SEARCH OF PERSONS EMPLOYED UNDERGROUND.

We draw attention to the fact that the search for prohibited articles under section 98 of the Act did not prevent matches being taken into the mine. We recommend that the regulations under this section be more strictly complied with, and that workmen be liable to be searched not only when entering the mine but also at any time when in the mine.

### 16. SUGGESTIONS FOR PREVENTION OF FUTURE ACCIDENTS.

This has already been fully dealt with in this report.

### 17. AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING LEGISLATION.

As already indicated, we recommend amendment of the present regulation concerning stone-dusting, along the lines indicated in paragraph 11. We also recommend an extension by legislation of the right to search persons employed underground, along the lines indicated in paragraph 15. Subject to these amendments, we think that the existing law, if strictly enforced, will ensure safety in coal-mines. We cannot stress too strongly the necessity for strict enforcement of the law and regulations.

### 18. GENERAL.

We express our appreciation of the assistance rendered to us during the inquiry by counsel, advocates, and the parties engaged. The secretary, Miss Kent, merits our sincere thanks for her extremely able and indefatigable work in recording the evidence and discharging her other duties.

We return herewith Your Excellency's Commission, and also enclose—

- (1) Minutes of the proceedings, and verbatim report of the evidence given;
- (2) Plans of the mine, and documents and records produced at the inquiry.

And we have the honour, in obedience to the Commission addressed to us, to submit this our report for the consideration of your Excellency.

Given under our hands and seals, at Invercargill, this 18th day of December, 1929.

W. H. WOODWARD.  
W. CARSON.  
J. SMEATON.