

65. In reference to the inflammable gas. Do you think the regulations already existing with regard to the use of safety-lamps are not broad enough?—No.

66. With regard to the employment of boys: I understand you want to raise the age from thirteen to fourteen?—Yes.

67. Why?—Because I say that a boy going into a mine at fourteen years of age is quite young enough.

68. Do you not think he is young enough at thirteen?—I think he is then too young.

69. We prevent him going into a mine under the age of thirteen, and you want to raise the age to fourteen?—Yes.

70. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Take clause No. 2: "The workmen's inspectors to be permitted to visit the scene of an accident immediately an accident occurs." How do you propose to have those inspectors appointed?—They would be appointed by the union.

71. One in each mine?—Two in each mine.

72. And do you expect the taxpayers to pay for them?—We are asking for that. The law gives us power to appoint two.

73. What are their duties to be?—To inspect the mine right through.

74. Would they work with the Inspector of Mines or have equal power?—No. I take it that although they would have power if the Government paid them, they would be in the position to report fully in the book and say if any coal was being lost or anything else, but under the present system the Inspector has no power.

75. You really wish to have a sub-inspector in each mine?—Yes.

76. At all events, in each large mine?—Yes. I say it should apply to all parts of the country.

77. Do you think fans are necessary up in Denniston?—Yes; we have a fan at Denniston.

78. In all the workings?—Yes.

79. Do you think that the sealing-off is not sufficient?—I think it is a dangerous practice, and that there should be sufficient air going into the mine to clear it of all dangerous gases. The 100 cubic feet per man and horse is not sufficient to ventilate the mine.

80. You consider that there should be an extra quantity for every acre of old workings?—Yes.

81. This will be very expensive, will it not?—I do not think so.

82. Take suggestion No. 10, with regard to the shift-boss and so on: do you not think that every one before being allowed to go into a coal-mine, should be compelled to pass an examination?—I do not know what examination he could pass. A person must go into a mine to acquire knowledge.

83. That is so, but if he should go in as a boy he would be under some one else's supervision?—Yes.

84. You told us just now of cases where men had gone into a mine who had not been in to work before?—Yes, and who were allowed to carry a lamp.

85. You think that before a man should be allowed to go there at all he should pass an examination?—If a man came to me and asked for a job, and said he was not a miner, I should decide whether he should go in or not, but because he had not been in a mine before that would be no reason why he should not go in.

86. Do you not think the present law is sufficient to protect the lives of the workmen?—We do not think it is. We want the shift-bosses to go through an examination.

87. I quite agree that they should be qualified miners, but I want to go a little further, and suggest that every man should know something about mining, and should feel his responsibility?—We should have people start with us the same as in any other industry—start when young; but that would be very hard to some people, and would put many a good man out of a job.

88. You have been trying to get preference given to unionists?—Yes.

89. Do you think there should be preference to unionists in a coal-mine?—I think so.

90. Do you think you could then depend upon having reliable men?—You would put these men in a position to know their duties before they went in.

91. How do you justify your proposal of double pay for Sunday work?—In all other industries men are paid double pay for Sunday work, and we think coal-miners are entitled to it also.

92. Take clause 14 in reference to check inspectors: do you not think this could be used to the detriment of the men in the mine? Have you given this serious consideration?—I do not think the unions would appoint unscrupulous people.

93. Look at the matter from this point of view: unionists have been charged with refusing to work in a mine, might they not get the inspectors to say that the mine was not safe and so stop the working of the mine?—I do not think they could do that. The Inspector of Mines at the present time has power to stop working in any section of the mine.

94. Coming to the award of the Arbitration Court, why did you accept that?—The reason was this: We as a body got advice on the matter and three courses were pointed out—first, to take the case to the Supreme Court to try to get the decision withdrawn; the next was to file a reference again; and the third course was to come to Parliament to see if we could not make what we wanted mandatory.

95. What was the period of your award?—Two years.

96. Had the two years expired then?—It was nearly three years. Next March it would be four years.

97. And could the Court compel you to work under the old award?—They did not alter it. The law says distinctly that so long as an award is in force you must abide by it.

98. The period of the award was two years?—Yes; and it never was altered.

99. It was a year after that before the Court sat to decide again?—It was nine months. We are in this position now, that we could file again to-morrow and they could do the same thing again. If they were justified in doing it last time they would be justified in doing it again. We took this course—