

175. Which mine was this?—The Tyneside Mine. It is a well-ventilated mine or it would not be possible to work with anything but safety-lamps, but we think that no other lamps than safety-lamps should be used in any mine that gives off inflammable gas.

176. *The Chairman.*] Have you anything else to say?—With regard to the fan, I think it is highly desirable that any mine where artificial ventilation is required ought to be ventilated by means of a fan. It is admitted to be the best mode of ventilation, and I think it is an important matter for the safety of life as well as the protection of health.

177. *Mr. J. Allen.*] With regard to the gas in the Tyneside Mine, you know the powers of inspection the miners possess under the Act of 1901: that they can appoint two inspectors to inspect every part of the mine?—Yes.

178. Was that done in this case?—Yes.

179. Did they make the report in the book that is provided for under that Act?—Yes.

180. Did they put down the number of times that they saw gas?—Yes, but only once.

181. Why did they not report more often?—Because they go in after the mine has been worked a few hours. The deputy goes in before the men go in.

182. Did the deputy report gas more frequently?—Yes.

183. Who to?—In the report-book. The report-book is kept at the deputy's cabin every day.

184. To whom is the report open?—To anybody.

185. That book is open to the Inspector?—Yes.

186. And it is open to the mine-manager?—Yes, and the miners as well.

187. So that there could be no secrecy about it?—No.

188. With regard to using safety-lamps: you know that under Regulation 55 the manager, under certain circumstances may order safety-lamps only to be used?—Yes.

189. You want to have that simplified?—Yes, to make it compulsory that nothing but safety-lamps shall be used in a mine giving off inflammable gas.

190. What quantity, for instance, would you say that a mine should be giving off—there might be a great deal or very little? We want to draw the line somewhere?—Yes. I could not give you the quantities of gas discovered in the Tyneside Mine, but it is stated in the report-book that gas has been discovered in one or two places every morning.

191. I do not think you would desire to compel a mine, where there is a little inflammable gas in one place, to be worked with safety-lamps all over the mine; admitting the connection and that the gas is there, it may not be enough to be a matter of danger, and in such a case would you wish to work that mine with safety-lamps?—Yes; where there is any gas at all there is always danger. I have worked in a mine considered to be not giving off much gas, but in particular places there have been quantities of gas discovered.

192. You think the miners would not object to be compelled to use safety-lamps even where very little gas is being given off?—I do not think that is the general opinion of miners, but in any case I think people who have not sufficient discretion to take care of their own lives should have other people to look after them.

193. You differ from some of the other miners?—I differ from some of them, but these propositions are from the miners.

194. *Mr. Smith.*] What is the mine-manager's name in the Tyneside Mine?—Mr. Allison.

195. Is he a competent man?—Oh, yes. The Government have sufficient power to order the use of safety-lamps.

196. *Mr. J. Allen.*] Is not that sufficient?—No; I do not think so.

197. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Have the men any objection to using safety-lamps?—I cannot say that they have because these propositions are sent up from the lodge of the Miners' Union. I know there is a lot of miners who have an objection to working with safety-lamps, but that is no reason why this provision should not be put in the Act, because some miners have an objection to setting sprags, but the law compels them to do it for their own safety; hence we want this clause put in the Mines Act to make it compulsory that safety-lamps shall be used where inflammable gas is known to exist. We want that made known irrespective of what certain miners may say. Everybody likes daylight better than dark, but there is a great deal of difference between the two.

198. You say that in the Tyneside Mine gas has been found on two or three days in the week?—Yes.

199. Does not the fireman go into the mine and chalk up in the place he visits the day of the month?—Yes.

200. And then he fixes up the mine-report before the men go in?—Yes, every morning.

201. And if the finding of gas is reported in the book, you say he should have reported it to the Inspector?—The Inspector himself could have ascertained from the report-book if gas was found in the mine.

202. And you say it has only been reported on one occasion?—Yes.

203. Do you complain about the Inspector for neglecting his duty?—I think he has neglected his duty. He stated that it had only been once found in the Tyneside Mine. It was equally his duty to report what the deputy had reported in the book on that particular subject.

204. How often does the Inspector go there—once in three months?—Yes.

205. Supposing he examines the mine-manager's report-book for every day in the three months, would it have been his duty to call attention to that?—Yes.

206. How is the Tyneside Mine being worked—through the same shaft at the station?—Yes.

207. Is there a tunnel through the river?—Yes; but they have a fan down a winding-shaft. That is the return. The men go in at the tunnel and not down the shaft.