

Mr.
T. Jones.
6 Nov., 1907.

28838. In the case which you have mentioned just now, had the steam not been cut off the engine-winder would have had his steam to hold the cage in position, but when his steam was cut off his brake power was not sufficient to hold it in position?—Quite so.

28839. And therefore an accident took place?—Yes.

28840. But I do not think you have quite caught my other point. It is this: in hanging on in mid-shaft—is that the Welsh term?—No—holding the cage, you may say, mid-way or in the middle of the shaft.

28841. I want to get to your terms: there are so many different terms for hanging on at pit-bottom, and so on; I mean hanging on at mid-shaft; two or four tubs, if it is a double-deck cage, may be hung on there. The existing brakes may not be strong enough, even when fully applied, to hold the cage there?—Quite so.

28842. The engine-winder, in addition to that, has to provide steam to hold his cage there?—Yes.

28843. If his steam were cut off at the boiler, as you

mentioned just now, then his existing brake—his foot brake—could not hold it?—Quite so.

28844. What you really want is that by an adequate brake he should have the power to apply a brake to hold the cage in the shaft with any weight that is on the cage?—Yes.

28845. You cannot conceive accidents arising from want of that power, you say?—No, not at present.

28846. Can you not conceive that accidents could arise from that want of brake power?—It is possible that they could.

28847. It is possible that they could, but you do not know of any accident occurring through it?—I do not know of any accident occurring through that which you have just referred to.

28848. And generally you agree with the other witnesses as to the necessity for all safety appliances being provided?—That is my sole object—the safety of the men that go under my hands.

FORTY-SECOND DAY.

Thursday, 7th November, 1907.

PRESENT :

Lord MONKSWELL (*Chairman*).

WM. ABRAHAM, Esq., M.P. (Rhondda).
H. H. S. CUNYNGHAME, Esq., C.B.
THOMAS RATCLIFFE ELLIS, Esq.

JOHN SCOTT HALDANE, Esq., F.R.S.
ROBERT SMILLIE, Esq.
S. W. HARRIS, Esq. (*Secretary*).

Mr. JOSEPH TOYN, called and examined.

Mr.
J. Toyn
7 Nov., 1907

28857. (*Chairman*.) I understand you are the Agent and President of the Cleveland Miners' and Quarrymen's Association?—Yes.

28858. You wish to-day to give us your views, not with regard to the coal mines in your district, but as to the ironstone mines, which are under the Coal Mines Regulation Act?—Yes. There are Special Rules for each district, of which I have a copy here.

28859. I understand that in the first place you desire to call attention to Rule 33?—Yes, that is as to deputies.

28860. Are your Special Rules the Cleveland code of Special Rules?—Yes.

28861. Special Rule No. 33 is headed: "Deputies:" "In the absence of the Overman and the Back-Overman, each deputy shall have the charge of the portion of the mine assigned to him. He shall, at the end of each day's work, ascertain that all men and boys are out of the district under his charge; but should it be necessary for any of them to remain he shall ascertain that they are left in charge of a responsible person: also that all unnecessary lights are extinguished, the main and tramway doors closed, and that the ventilation is going its proper course." That is the rule which you desire to call attention to?—Yes, more especially as to the appointment of deputies.

28862. What have you to say with regard to the appointment of deputies?—We say that there should be a practical examination in order to see that a man is competent to be a deputy.

28863. What sort of examination do you suggest?—That he should be examined as to his knowledge of the nature of roof, as to sounding, and as to whether there is any presence of gas.

28864. Who should conduct this examination?—That is the question. We would suggest that at each mine there should be two practical miners appointed by the men along with the manager and his under-manager.

28865. You would have four people to form a sort of committee to examine a man before he is permitted to act as deputy?—Yes—either four or any other number. We are not particular about that, only that there should be someone on each side, and that they should be able to test the man to see that he was fit to take the position.

28866. The principal expert knowledge that he would have to possess would be knowledge of ventilation: his particular duty is to look after the ventilation?—There is more knowledge required in regard to the nature of the roofs and timbering: so many accidents happen through roofs coming down.

28867. Exactly. But this Special Rule 33 apparently does not deal with timbering and the roofs and sides. You see this rule merely deals, apparently, with the supervision of ventilation by the deputy, and says nothing about timbering. Is there any rule to show how far the deputy is at present responsible for the timbering?—That rule points out also that in the absence of the overman the deputy is responsible for the district.

28868. He is in charge of the portion of the mine assigned to him?—Yes; and we think that before a deputy is taken to be competent to do that, he ought to show his fitness. Our point is that men are doing that kind of work and are appointed now who are not competent.

28869. Whom do you call the "back-overman"? Is he the deputy overman?—The back-overman, as he is called, is an official of the mine.

28870. He is the next official to the overman?—Yes.

28871. You have the manager, the under-manager or the overman, and perhaps sometimes the under-manager is called the "overman"?—They are not included in that rule. They are very often called "deputies," and really they practically are, because in the absence of the overman they have charge of the district. But these men whom we want to deal with are really the working deputies who have the charge of the timbering.

28872. The back-overman is a mines' official, who probably has an under-manager's certificate?—Yes.

28873. Do you know whether he must have an under-manager's certificate?—Yes, I believe so.

28874. So that you say that a deputy should have qualifications of somewhat the same nature as the overman has at present?—Of that nature—to show that he is a practical man.

28875. Have you anything to say with regard to the deputy's inspection of ventilation? There is nothing in your statement about ventilation, but do you wish to say anything with regard to that?—Only that he should have knowledge when gas is present. Of course it is the under-manager's business to get rid of the gas, but the deputy should be able to prove when gas is there.

28876. The number of accidents in the ironstone mines compares very unfavourably with the number of accidents in the coal mines in your own district, the Durham district?—Yes.

28877. But the statistics of accidents appears to be even more unfavourable in the ironstone mines above ground than they are below ground. That, I suppose, you have nothing to do with?—We do not complain about that here.

28878. In fact it is not your business, I suppose. You do not represent above-ground workers, do you?—Yes, we represent the above-ground workers as well, but we are not speaking about them to-day.

28879. It is rather a remarkable thing that in the coal mines the above-ground accidents are just about a half a person in 1,000, and in the ironstone mines the above-ground accidents are very nearly two in 1,000?—Yes. It is a different character of work—heavier work.

28880. It is 0.66 in coal mines, and 1.940 in ironstone mines?—Yes.

28881. How do you account for that?—I think we have more inclines, and it is rather harder and more difficult work than the work is about the coal mines on the surface.

28882. At all events, you have no suggestion to make as regards work on the surface?—No, it is more particularly with regard to the deputies that we wish to speak, and the underground work.

28883. You only propose to tell us about the underground accidents; but it is a very serious thing that there should be such an enormous difference—almost four times as many accidents among the persons employed above ground in the ironstone mines as there are among the persons employed in coal mines above ground in the same district? Surely there must be somebody who can give us some suggestion as to how accidents above ground can be lessened?—We have not taken that into consideration.

28884. (*Mr. Wm. Abraham.*) Will you kindly take it into consideration, and send someone to give evidence here who can speak about it. It seems so very strange that you should be here representing a body of men who have a less number of accidents than the men who are outside happen to have, and you are representing both in your union?—You do not mean that we have a less number of accidents underground than we have outside, do you?

28885. Yes?—Oh dear, no.

28886. (*Chairman.*) As compared to coal mines?—That may be.

28887. As compared to coal mines, the accidents below ground are more per cent. than the accidents above ground, but the accidents in ironstone mines above ground compare more unfavourably with the coal mines than the underground accidents do?—And so do our underground accidents, do they not?

28888. No, not to the same extent. There is about 50 per cent. difference in the ironstone mines compared with the coal mines below ground; and above ground there is something like 300 per cent. difference—one is three times or nearly four times as much as the other in

the case of accidents above ground?—I know I am not here to ask questions, but may I ask whether you include the quarries in that?

28889. No, only the mines under the Coal Mines Regulation Act. It is a marvellous state of things?—I can only say this, that the work is heavy work, and we have a number of inclines where they run the stone down in large sets at once, and at the coal pits I take it in a great many of them they just pull the kerb up and tip it, and there is no incline or anything. Now we have lots of inclines, and it is far heavier work than the work is about the coal pit.

28890. Do you mean above ground?—Yes, above ground.

28891. That is the explanation which you give. But you are not commissioned to say anything to us on behalf of the men with respect to these above-ground accidents?—That is so.

28892. (*Mr. Wm. Abraham.*) We had better ask you to send someone?—I do not think we could give you this information. At a mine like Eston, where there are three inclines and one very steep one, they will very likely employ men who are what we call "greenhorns" to work about those inclines, and we think that that is to a great extent how these accidents happen.

28893. (*Chairman.*) Well, that is a reason; someone can speak to us about these "greenhorns," as you call them?—I should not like to say anything definite about it, because we have not prepared ourselves with regard to what goes on outside.

28894. But still, that is a very important matter. You see there are two kinds of mines in the same district, namely, coal mines and ironstone mines, both of which are under the Coal Mines Regulation Act, and in one class the accidents on the surface, in proportion to the men employed, are nearly four times as much as in the other?—I have been in the Cleveland district for many years, more than 50 years, and I could not suggest to you any safer means outside.

28895. (*Mr. Wm. Abraham.*) If you will allow me to say so, I think we had better drop this subject now and ask the Chairman to be kind enough to allow you to come again to give evidence on this special question?—If it is necessary we can do so; we can make inquiry, if you put it in that way.

28896. You see it is a question upon which we want men to speak specifically and definitely, or else it is of no use?—If you wish it we will appoint someone to give evidence before you.

28897. (*Chairman.*) By all means. You have made one suggestion, that it is owing to the employment of persons who are not very well skilled?—That is a sort of haphazard statement. I have an idea that a good deal of that is done.

28898. (*Mr. Wm. Abraham.*) Yes, we have an idea about it, but we want someone to come here to speak to it specifically?—If you wish it, it shall be done.

28899. (*Chairman.*) We should like to hear the evidence of someone who knows all about it. You see with regard to falls of roof and sides the accidents are very heavy?—Yes.

28900. The figures as to fatal accidents in the Cleveland mines are these: out of 15 fatal accidents underground, 11 were due to falls of roof and sides?—Yes.

28901. It is a very large proportion—a larger proportion than in the case of the coal mines. So that it is very clear that it is a matter which requires a great deal of consideration. Then you say that the treacherous nature of the roofs and the heavy timber required to secure them, make it imperative that for the safety of the deputies themselves and of the miners under their charge, two skilled deputies should be allowed to go together?—Yes.

28902. You say that a deputy should never go by himself, but that they should be allowed to go together. Do you mean that if a deputy thinks it is desirable that he should have another deputy to go with him, he should be always permitted to take another deputy?—Scarcely that. They have to go two together. In one mine they have to go three together, where it is very high and there is very heavy timber; but in all the mines it requires two to put baulks in.

28903. That is so now?—That is so now.

28904. Then you are not making a new suggestion when you say that two deputies should be allowed to go together?—Two skilled men. May I say that in some

*Mr.
J. Toyn.*
7 Nov., 1907.

Mr.
J. Toyn.
7 Nov., 1907.

of the mines that is the practice now—that two skilled men go together. They generally take the best miners for the deputies, and two skilled men go together. Then we have a number of mines where there is a skilled man, and they put an unskilled man with him.

28905. That is what you object to?—That is what we object to.

28906. I suppose you would say that if it was necessary to teach men their duty as to timbering, the third man, who is a learner, should go with the other two skilled men. How would you propose to teach a man to timber?—There is never much difficulty in the other mines where the old practice is carried out: they take the best miner, and he goes away with the deputy at once, and he only has to learn the cutting of the timber, because he knows about the nature of the roof, and all that sort of thing. He is very soon trained.

28907. Then your proposal is that there should be some Special Rule applying to ironstone mines, to the effect that two skilled men should always go together?—Yes.

28908. At present that is the case in a great many mines?—At present that is the case in a number of mines, and in a number of others, perhaps five or six, there is a system which has crept in during these recent years of putting an unskilled man with a skilled man.

28909. Of late years?—Yes, it has crept up these late years.

28910. Would you say that that ought to apply to every ironstone mine in your district?—Yes. We do not want to single out any particular mine, if you will allow me to say so, but we speak in a general sense—I mean we do not want to “spot” anybody.

28911. No, but possibly there may be some mines where the roofs are not of such a treacherous nature as they are in others?—That is so.

28912. Where it may not be necessary always to have two skilled men going about together?—Then if the men have to put timber in—to put balks in—they should be allowed to go two skilled men together. If there are two skilled deputies together, the one assists the other, and there are two pairs of eyes to see the danger in the place and to look after the men, and to look after each other. Now if you take one of the skilled men away and put a man with him who is not responsible and who is unskilled, then there is one pair of eyes in the place, and he not only has to look after the miners but he has also to look after his mate, and he has only one pair of eyes and one brain to do what two pairs of eyes and two brains should do.

28913. What you say would apply to all coal mines as well as ironstone mines?—I think perhaps two ought to go together in those cases, but I may say that our district is an exceptional one in the whole of the United Kingdom; I have not known one like it.

28914. You go on to say that no men should be permitted to set or put in timber who have no practical knowledge of timbering. How far would you carry that; do you suggest that in every case the ironstone getter should be a distinct man from the man who puts up the timber? An ironstone getter, I suppose, might know enough of timbering to put up his own timber, to a certain extent?—Some of them are competent to do it.

28915. How would you arrange that?—It is the incompetent men that we complain about.

28916. How would you decide as to who is competent and who is incompetent?—I think you will see that further on in the statement we suggest that no man should be allowed to be a deputy unless he has had three years' experience in getting stone.

28917. I am not speaking about deputies, but about the ironstone getter who is not a deputy?—Yes.

28918. Supposing he is there and sees that a certain amount of timber is required, and required very quickly, so that perhaps it would be difficult for him to get a deputy to set the timber in time, might he not be allowed to set, it himself?—No. If he knocks a prop out with a shot or anything of that sort, he can set it up, but he ought not to put any balks of timber in.

28919. However skilled the man is? He might be just as skilled as the deputy who generally puts in the timber?—Yes, but it is not in his calling, and he has not the tools there to do it with, and he does not do that.

28920. That is not the practice?—No. If the timber has been set and he accidentally knocks it out with his shot.

he must either set it or go for the deputy; but with regard to putting in new timber, he has nothing to do with that at all.

28921. Is it contrary to the Special Rule that he should be allowed to set up new timber, or is it the practice that he should not do that?—I do not think there is a Special Rule about it. In some districts of the coal mines I think some of the men do their own timbering, but in the ironstone mines there are special deputies told off to do that kind of work.

28922. So that it would be a perfectly wrong thing for an ironstone getter, however competent he might be, to set up his own timber?—It would be, except in putting punch props in, if he is cutting out a piece of stone, or if a piece of stone is overhanging. In such cases as that a deputy would provide him with suitable lengths to put that timber in, but it is not his business to do the timbering, and he is not allowed to do it.

28923. You go on to say that none but practical men should be allowed to examine places that miners have to work in before they commence their shift's work. I imagine that that would always be so. Did you ever know an unpractical man who was allowed to examine these places?—I do not know that we could point out any particular case; but we think it ought to be provided so as to make it imperative that no man should do it.

28924. Would you have some sort of Special Rule to provide for that? It is the duty of the deputy to examine these places, and I suppose the deputy, whether he has passed an examination or not, is generally a practical man; you say that as a general rule the best miners are made deputies?—Yes, under the old system, but not under this new one.

28925. It is not the case under this new system?—No; that is what we are complaining about.

28926. You complain that inferior men are being made deputies?—We complain that men who have not had a practical knowledge of getting stone on the face are put on under the new scheme. One practical man has sometimes four or five others under his charge; I can give you a case where a man had four or five under his charge, and he went round to examine in the morning, and he told off two of the men to go into one district to timber, and two in another, and then he took the remaining man with him; during the day two fillers found the top was not very good, and they went to one of the deputies to get him to come and examine the top, and that assistant-deputy said that the top was all right; then before the day was out both men were injured.

28927. You complain that although matters were fairly satisfactory some time ago, recently a practice has crept in of making deputies of men who have not had sufficient experience?—That is so, with the exception of about one or two mines. I believe this practice has prevailed in one mine, or two mines, with a low seam where the tops are not very bad, for a number of years. But in recent years other mines, where the tops are not very good, have adopted the same principle, and we complain about it. Then there is another thing: there should be a deputy in charge of the men as long as the men are in. That Rule which you have read out says that they must see all the men out, the lights out, and that sort of thing. Now only last Saturday I attended an inquest where the deputy left at 20 minutes past 12; he left his assistant in charge from 20 minutes past 12 till the men went out; that assistant was not competent to examine in the morning, and he had not done so, but it seems that he was competent to take charge of the men after the other man had left. We say that there ought to have been a competent man left there in charge of that mine until the men went out, and that is why we want to keep there all practical deputies that are setting timber.

28928. The Special Rule says “Should it be necessary for any of them to remain he shall ascertain that they are left in charge of a responsible person?”—Yes.

28929. That is to say, that there must be some responsible person, according to your Special Rule 33, while the men are in the mine, to look after them?—Yes. We say an assistant-deputy is not a responsible person.

28930. Well, he may or may not be, I suppose?—That is what is done.

28931. I suppose there are some assistant-deputies who know their duties perfectly well, and as well as the deputies themselves?

28932. (Mr. Wm. Abraham.) What was the object of the coroner's inquiry in that case?—The coroners do not understand it.

Mr.
J. Toyn.
7 Nov., 1907.

28933. (*Chairman.*) What was the verdict?—The verdict was "accidental death." It was not the fault of the deputies with regard to the accident at all. I am not speaking about that, but out of the enquiry there appeared the fact that when the deputy was put in he examined in the morning himself. I asked him the question myself: "Is your assistant competent to examine?" He said, "No"; and I said, "Then it appears he is competent to take charge of the men after you leave, but he is not competent to examine."

28934. (*Mr. Wm. Abraham.*) Was there a Mines Inspector at this enquiry?—Yes.

28935. Did he point out that there had been any breach of any rule?—No, I do not think he did.

28936. (*Chairman.*) But surely it was the fault of the deputy, if he did not leave a responsible person in charge when he went away himself. The rule says that he is to leave a responsible person in charge. I suppose he might say that the man he left was a responsible person, even although he was not capable of examining, because the examination had already taken place. I suppose that what you mean by a responsible person is that you ought to have a man who is capable of examining?—Yes, he ought to be capable of examining at any moment during the shift, because in our mines sometimes it will be all right at one moment, but an hour afterwards the top becomes bad; we say that every moment during the shift when the men are in there should be a competent man there.

28937. But it certainly appears to me that "a responsible person" ought to be held to mean a person who is equal to the duties which he is called upon to perform?—Yes.

28938. And in that case it was clear, from what you said, if you are correct in your statement, that the deputy did not appoint a responsible person to look after the men after he went away?—I expect it would be the manager who would arrange the business, and he had this assistant, and I asked the assistant myself "What happens: do you put timber up?" He said, "Sometimes I put up a prop," but if there was a baulk wanted he had to go away into another district to seek a deputy. There was not one in his district, and he had to go away to another.

28939. Then you think it was not the fault of the deputy, but that it was the fault of the management for giving the deputy an assistant who was not a responsible person?—Yes, it is the management that is at fault for allowing such a system to go on.

28940. It does not seem to me that Rule 33 fails to meet that, because it does appear to meet the case; but in my opinion, if what you say is correct, the rule was not properly enforced—the management broke the rule themselves by not giving the deputy a responsible assistant?—There is no doubt that is so.

28941. Is there anything else you would like to say about Rule 33?—I would only like to say this, that you have it stated in your report that a large number of accidents happen from falls of roof. The Cleveland district is to a very large extent pillar working, that is to say, it has been worked once through, and they are now working out what you might call the supports or the pillars. Of course it causes sometimes what we call a creep. I do not know whether you understand that: it puts weight on, and it will burst pieces off the side, and it makes the top give way. We think that there is now more need for practical men putting in timber than ever there was.

28942. You also say that the management, according to your account, are getting more lax in regard to the men they employ?—Yes, they are. Of course it is a question which I could not introduce here properly, but, if you will allow me to say so, it is simply in order to work on the cheap—to tell you straight.

28943. What is the state of things with regard to the accidents during the last few years?—They are rather less than they used to be.

28944. How do you account for that, if the management is more lax?—I do not think the management is more lax, only they are trying to do it cheaper. There are some mine owners in Cleveland who have asked me myself about it, and they have said that if I can suggest any means they would adopt it, but that is where they have an equal responsibility with the deputies.

28945. I do not quite follow you, because you began by saying that the management was getting more and more lax, and that they were less particular as to the men they employed in responsible situations, and at the same time the mines were getting more dangerous to work; but you

now tell me that the number of accidents has grown less in the last few years?—The mine owners are not lax except in this particular point, so far as I know. I do not think they would do anything to cause an accident to a man; but in later years the men have become more accustomed to deal with the matter. We adopt the principle laid down by the Act, which we have a right to do, of sending two men round every month to examine, and those men do go round to examine.

28946. It is only lately that you have done that?—We have been doing it for some time, but there is more of it done now. I may tell you that we advise the men to do all they can, and they do all they can to prevent accidents. I think both the management and the men themselves have helped, perhaps, to minimise accidents.

28947. You say that the diminution in the number of accidents is to some extent, at all events, caused by the periodical examination by the men which takes place now more often than it used to?—I think so; and the mines are better ventilated than they used to be in earlier times. I have known when there have been 26 fatal accidents in our district in a year: that was in the old times when there was not such good ventilation, and men were less capable, probably, than they are now.

28948. But then the ventilation would not affect the falls of the roof and sides?—It would prevent the men from seeing the danger. The better the ventilation is, the more they have a chance to see whether the top is giving away, because there is a large amount of powder used in our district—probably 1,100 or 1,200 tons in a year. It takes about half a pound of powder to a ton of stone, I should think.

28949. Sometimes there would be clouds of dust, and so on, from the explosion of the powder, which would obscure the view and tend to make it more difficult to prop up the roof and sides?—Yes. I have seen the ventilation so bad when I was getting stone myself, that, after we fired the first shot in the morning, we could never see one another during the day. But it is nothing like so bad now.

28950. You go on to deal with Rule 65 with regard to drilling machines, and you say that young and inexperienced men should not be permitted to take charge of a machine or be entrusted to fire shots unless they have had at least three years' experience in getting stone in the face?—Yes.

28951. Have you anything to complain of with regard to that?—There have been men appointed to these machines who never did any mining, and a man who does the charging after the machines, has to examine a place after the shots are fired, before the fillers are allowed to go in, and if he is not a competent man he would not know whether the top was safe or not.

28952. I see that there is nothing about incompetency in Rule 65. It says, "Where drilling machines are used each chageman shall before commencing work in any place, and each shot-firer after firing a shot, shall examine the face, sides, and top," and so on. I suppose it is understood that a chageman should be a man who is competent to discharge his duties?—Yes.

28953. (*Mr. Ratcliffe Ellis.*) Who is the chageman?—He charges the shots after these power machines.

28954. (*Chairman.*) He is trusted to fire the shots—Yes. If I might explain to you, a power machine will go into a place and perhaps drill 8 or 10 holes before it comes out, and then a man to charge the shots follows in, and he fires them all. After he has done that he has got to examine the roof and sides to see that it is safe before the unskilled men, the fillers, come in, and therefore we think he should be a thoroughly competent man.

28955. Would the deputy do that, as a rule?—No, the chageman would do that. The deputy examines the place in the morning.

28956. The chageman has not necessarily had the experience of a deputy?—No. Of course he has to have some practice before he is allowed to fire his shots.

28957. You say that there ought to be some stringent rules and regulations applying to chagemen, and that nobody ought to be allowed to exercise the duties of chagemen unless he has had a certain amount of experience?—Yes.

28958. That is not so now. Inexperienced men are employed, you say?—Well, it is only now and again that one hears of men who are not competent.

28959. Have you ever complained to a Mines Inspector that inexperienced men are employed as chagemen?—We do not like to do so very much.

Mr.
J. Toyn.
7 Nov., 1907.

28960. What are you afraid of?—Well, when we have complained to them they never make much out of it.

28961. (*Dr. Haldane.*) The danger you refer to is from falls of roof after the shot?—Yes—to see that the place is all right before the fillers go in. The reason why we have put this down in the statement is that we have known cases where young men have come in and taken charge of a machine. Of course the chargeman drills the holes, but he has never had any practical work in mining at all, but he has to have a youth or a young man with him to change the drills, and of course he has charge of the drill, and the place, and that young man's life while he is doing that work. Therefore, we think he should be someone who understands the nature of the roof before he is allowed to go and drill—for his own sake and for the sake of the young man who is with him.

28962. (*Chairman.*) But do not the managers of these mines consider that that is a reasonable proposition on your part?—They do not pay any regard to us—they set on all they like.

28963. But you say it is only in exceptional cases that you have known such things happen?—I grant you it is exceptional, but we want to make it so that they cannot do it.

28964. You would like to have a Rule to the effect that a man should have a certain amount of experience before he is made a chargeman?—Yes, especially the chargeman, more than the driller, because the chargeman has to fire the shots, and he must know that the place is safe and pass it as safe before the unskilled filler comes in.

28965. A filler need not be skilled in general mining?—No: he knows nothing about it: he just goes and breaks up the stone and fills it.

28966. There is no reason why he should be skilled in general mining, is there: an inexperienced man who knew nothing about mining might be a very proper person as filler if he had a proper person appointed as chargeman over him?—Well, the more skilled they are the better, but unfortunately this class of men who come in as fillers are quite inexperienced. Sometimes I have known them to be men who come in off the road, and they have been given money to get candles with, and then they come the next day, and perhaps such a man would not know how to see to that.

28967. No, it is the duty of the chargeman to see to it?—Yes.

28968. Then you deal with the question of the inspection of mines, and you complain that Mines Inspectors have too extensive an area to cover, and cannot possibly visit and inspect the mines in their respective districts as they ought to do. I should like to hear your views as to that?—I should say in the first place that we do not complain about the work the inspectors are doing, but we are absolutely certain that they cannot possibly inspect the mines as they ought to be inspected: they have too much work to do. Of course our own district is connected with South Durham for inspection. In our own district, with the exception of one mine up in Weardale, which is under the Metalliferous Mines Act, there are 20 mines and 16 quarries that we cover, and that is only a portion. Now when the Mines Inspectors go to a mine, it is not enough that they should go just into two or three places and see them. We say that all the air-courses and every working place ought to be thoroughly inspected by an inspector once at least in six months. As a rule now, the inspectors cannot do it. I believe they work very hard, but we find that most of the inspectors will go, after an accident, to see the place.

28969. How would you propose to deal with that?—would you propose more inspectors and more assistant inspectors than there are at present?—Yes.

28970. Or would you have a third class of inspector, who perhaps had been a working miner, and who would be very much in the position of a deputy?—That would be the best policy.

28971. Do you suggest that somebody like a deputy should be appointed?—Yes—a thoroughly practical man.

28972. That a thoroughly practical man should be appointed mine inspector?—Yes, because the inspectors now, with all due deference to them, only have the theoretical part of it, most of them. Of course they have been mine managers, I daresay, but they have not the practical knowledge.

28973. How many of this class of inspectors do you think it would be desirable to have? I suppose they

would not be men who would expect to become in the course of time assistant inspectors or inspectors; they would probably be a class by themselves who would always remain in a third division of inspectors?—I have not thought about that point, but if they could work themselves up and pass so as to get up higher, I would allow them to do so.

28974. What would you consider should be the remuneration of those people: should it be something like £150 a year, £3 a week?—Yes, there could be good men got to do it for that.

28975. How many would you suggest?—I think there is plenty of work for one in our own district.

28976. Then I suppose you have two assistant inspectors in your district?—There is a chief inspector and there are two assistant inspectors, and they have to cover Cleveland, South Durham and a part of Westmoreland, I believe—all the mines and quarries.

28977. That is to say, you have three?—Yes. They cannot possibly do it.

28978. You think that one working-man inspector would be sufficient help?—In our district: I think he ought to be set down in Cleveland, and there is abundance of work for him there.

28979. Do you mean for iron-stone mines alone?—Yes.

28980. You would have a working-man whose duty it would be solely to inspect the iron stone mines, not the coal mines at all?—Yes.

28981. You suggest that his duties should be confined to Cleveland, Whitby and the Rosedale Abbey districts. Does that comprise all the ironstone mines of the district?—I think I have very nearly covered them.

28982. You think that one working-man inspector would be enough to cover all the ironstone mines in your district?—It would be as much as he could ever possibly do; I am not quite sure that he could do it, but I thought I had better not put it too little.

28983. At all events, you think a beginning might be made by appointing one man?—Yes.

28984. (*Mr. Wm. Abraham.*) The great danger in your district is because it is an ironstone district, which is quite different to a coal-mining district? Altogether different.

28985. The danger arises from the fact that you have to use so much powder, about $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. to every ton of stone, I think you said?—I should think it is nearly that amount.

28986. And that is in itself a great source of danger?—There is no doubt about that. You see with such heavy shots being fired with, say, 2 lbs. of powder in, it is bound to shake the roof.

28987. So that your danger is not a danger arising from gas at all?—Not so much.

28988. But it arises from the fact that so much powder is used that it shakes the roof and sides, and that they are frequently giving way; that is the great source of accidents in your district?—Yes. We have gas, and men have lost their lives from inflammable gas; but that is not our most dangerous point; we are not complaining much about that.

28989. In the first instance, in the opening-out of these mines, it is dangerous work?—Yes.

28990. But you say that in your district now you are chiefly working pillars which were left behind in mines that had been worked before?—Yes.

28991. As a practical man, does that in your opinion vastly increase the danger?—We think so.

28992. We want to understand now the chief reason of the dangerous conditions of working; that being so, if I understood you rightly, your great complaint is that there are managers who allow incompetent men to be appointed to the most responsible position in that dangerous district; that is the burthen of your complaint?—What we say is that they are not all responsible deputies. They have assistants; some of the assistants may be practical men; some of them may be old men, but some of them are young men, and they are not practical men.

28993. But you are not charging the whole body of employers in the district with what I should call this disgraceful state of things?—No.

28994. Still, you know within your own knowledge that there are a number who allow incompetent men to be appointed to these responsible positions, and you wish to make that impossible?—They do not call them responsible, but they are put there, and they are put under another man.

28995. (*Chairman.*) I understood you to say that sometimes the deputies themselves were not competent?—Well, they are not.

28996. And still less the assistant deputies?—Yes.

28997. (*Mr. Wm. Abraham.*) Is General Rule 39 of the Mines Act put in force in your district at all?—We have not much fault to find with respect to that. We are only told that one man is not allowed to get stone in the face; but then they can put two unskilled men, and two can do so.

28998. Let us deal with that; is that so really?—We have no fault to find about that.

28999. It is not a question of your finding fault; you are here now. The point which you have made is a point which may appeal to some of us who have practical knowledge like yourself?—I think as a rule our managers are careful not to commit a breach of that rule. As a rule the managers in Cleveland do not commit a breach of that rule.

29000. But why did you say just now that they consider they are not committing a breach of the rule if they put in two unpractical men?—That has been a decision which has been given; that is all I mean. You know it yourselves, I think.

29001. But we are speaking now about what is the practice in your district?—The practice in our district is, I think, to keep the rule, so far as I know.

29002. Then you have no complaint to make?—Not on that point.

29003. (*Chairman.*) I am told there is no such decision, as you suggest, that the rule allows two unskilled men to work together?—I believe that has been decided, but we have no trouble with that, and I do not think our managers commit a breach of that rule at all by putting a man in by himself. I have never heard of it. As a rule, the rule is carried out.

29004. (*Mr. Wm. Abraham.*) Then what is the nature of your complaint in regard to their allowing unpractical miners to become fillers?—We cannot prevent them.

29005. It is not a question of preventing it; you want to remedy this condition of things?—They are not working in the face; they are only breaking up the stone that has been got.

29006. (*Chairman.*) I understand you do not object to inexperienced men being brought in as fillers so long as they understand the drill?—We do not object to them at all. It is not a question of drilling; all they have to do is to break up the stone and fill it; they do not work in the face.

29007. (*Mr. Wm. Abraham.*) Will you try and understand the question which I put to you; these men are allowed to fill in places where the stone has been brought down by the force of powder?—Yes.

29008. Is that always safe?—It is within the scope of the Mines Act; it is perfectly in order.

29009. Then you do not want to amend that at all?—We do not want to complain about that at all. We have no complaint upon that.

29010. But I thought you said just now that these men, being strangers to the mine, are placed to fill stone where, by their own knowledge, they could not so examine the place as to be able to inform themselves whether it was safe or not?—No, they could not.

29011. That is so?—That is so. But the chargeman has to look after them; it is in the Special Rule; the chargeman has to see that the place is safe for them. There is no fault on that head at all. I do not think we have had more than two fillers killed in the whole history of our Cleveland mines. We have no fault to find upon that point at all.

29012. I am glad to hear that. I thought you had a complaint to make?—No, we have not.

29013. Then your complaint chiefly is against incompetent men being placed in responsible positions as deputies and so forth?—Yes.

29014. Then let us deal with that. To what extent has that been done?—I should think at the present time there would be probably about six or seven mines in the Cleveland district where that has been carried out—seven, perhaps.

29015. (*Mr. Smillie.*) Out of 20?—Out of 20.

29016. (*Mr. Wm. Abraham.*) That is to say one-third?—Yes.

29017. Now what is the present means of examining these men for the appointments?—The under-manager, if he wants a deputy, just goes to a certain man and says: "I want you to start deputy work," and the man goes and starts. There is no examination at all.

29018. Naturally the manager would select the most competent man that he had, would he not?—He probably might.

29019. Your complaint is that he does not—we may as well have it, you know?—No, it is not so much that as the system. To try and make you understand, I will put it in this way: I will suppose that you are a practical deputy, and that you have another practical deputy with you.

(*Chairman.*) I understood the Witness to say that the best men were not appointed as deputies, certainly.

29020. (*Mr. Wm. Abraham.*) That is what I understood you to say when you answered my question: the burthen of your complaint is that unpractical men are being appointed in some places to the most responsible positions in the practical working of a mine?—As assistants.

29021. (*Chairman.*) No, I understood you to say as deputies as well as assistants?—I am not complaining so much about the deputy who is responsible, as his having an irresponsible man put with him when there ought to be two responsible men together.

29022. You, yourself, say it is necessary to have this examination for deputies because you consider that the deputies are not up to the mark?—Some of them are not.

29023. (*Mr. Wm. Abraham.*) That is the point. We do not believe that you charge the whole district, but there is occasionally a case of the kind, and you have said that it is so for one-third of the district?—I think I can put it to you clearly in this way: there are certain mines in the district where the principle is to select the best miners for the deputies, and they put two of those selected men together, and they are both responsible—one is as good as the other; they are both competent to go and inspect in the morning, and they are competent to do any part of the work. Now in six or eight of the other mines, instead of having those two competent men together, they have one competent man and another assistant with him who ought to be a man equal to himself. I cannot put it any clearer.

29024. (*Chairman.*) Then it seems to me that I misunderstood your evidence to some extent, because I certainly understood you to say that it was necessary to have this examination for deputies, inasmuch as some mine managers did not appoint the best men they could get as deputies, and that some deputies were certainly not up to the mark: and that was the reason why you insisted upon having an examination of deputies?—That is so to a certain extent: there are some men who have been appointed deputies who have never been miners.

29025. (*Mr. Wm. Abraham.*) That is what we want to get from you if you had only stuck to one story. We do not think for a moment that you are charging the whole district with this practice, but that you have known of some cases where they allow incompetent men to be appointed to a most responsible and practical position in the mine?—We have some that have not had the knowledge which we think they ought to have had before they were appointed.

29026. Very well, you have some. I do not believe that every district would allow that state of things to exist, but as you know, all that legislation can do is to bring up the unpractical and indifferent employers to the level of what the best practical employer does without the legislation?—Yes.

29027. That is the burthen of your complaint now, that there are men in the mines who are guilty of making appointments, as you have reason to believe, of men who are not practical?—Yes. May I give you an illustration?

29028. I think if you will leave it there it will be sufficient?—I would rather give you an illustration: here is a mine with 50 deputies in it: who are all practical men: now it suits the manager's purpose to take 20 of those practical men away and to put 20 men as assistants there who are not practical men. I want to ask you, if you will allow me to do so, is the efficiency of those deputies the same as it was when they had 50 competent men? That is the real kernel of the thing.

29029. (*Chairman.*) Still, what you say is rather a puzzle to me, because you distinctly said to begin with, as I understood you, that there were certain men in the

Mr.
J. Toyn.
7 Nov., 1907.

Mr.
J. Toyn.
7 Nov., 1907.

position of deputies who were not the best men that could be got and who had not got the practical experience. Now you say that a certain number of the deputies are withdrawn and that assistant-deputies are put in their places, and you have no complaint whatever to make, as I understand, with regard to the men who are nominally the deputies, but the complaint you have to make is that certain assistant-deputies are put in the place of the deputies to perform their duties?—That is the chief complaint. There is a little complaint about men being appointed who are not competent, but not so much that as with regard to assistants to the deputies being appointed who are not competent.

29030. Then you would insist, I suppose, upon anyone who exercised a function of deputy at all, whether as assistant-deputy or as deputy, passing this examination?—Yes, that is it.

29031. (Mr. Wm. Abraham.) Have you known cases where deputies have been appointed who have had less experience than three years?—Yes, certainly: some have never had any experience at all in getting ironstone.

29032. Then we will come back to that: there is a case against the deputies as well as against the assistant-deputies?—We do not want to bring that up.

29033. But I want to know the truth: we are sitting here to investigate the truth, and we expect to have it from a man in your position?—We have known men who have never got any ironstone being appointed deputies.

29034. Very well, there you are, if you can prove that?—We can.

29035. Do you know of cases where unpractical men have been allowed to put up timber in dangerous places?—I could not say that I have known such cases. Of course, these assistants have gone to put it up.

29036. Well, the assistant is a man after all?—He is a man, but he is not a competent man.

29037. That is the point; I am trying to help you all I can. So that these incompetent men are allowed to go to dangerous places to do things which nobody but competent men ought to do?—They are supposed to be under the superintendence of the one man.

29038. But they are allowed to go by themselves?—They are. Might I correct that: two of them go—not single-handed. Where they have to put baulks in it takes two of them, and two assistants have gone to timber a district.

29039. Are the two who go together incompetent?—Yes.

29040. (Chairman.) Both of them are incompetent?—Well, they are assistants.

(Mr. Wm. Abraham.) But they are incompetent men, whatever their position is.

29041. (Chairman.) One of them is an incompetent man and the other is a competent man, perhaps?—I would not like to say that with regard to all of them. I must say that there are some old miners who have been put on to that kind of work, and I could not say that they are incompetent.

29042. We do not suggest that you should say that everyone is incompetent?—I could not say that that class of man is incompetent, but I mean to say a greenhorn who has been taken on to fill and then does the other kind of work, would be incompetent.

29043. (Mr. Wm. Abraham.) You say in your statement that two skilled deputies should be allowed to go together?—Yes.

29044. And that no men should be permitted to set or put in timber who have no practical knowledge of timbering?—Yes.

29045. I ask you whether that is so—no matter how infrequently it happens, but does it happen?—It does.

29046. Very well, that is all that we want. Now you want to have some Rule made, either Special or General, to prevent that being allowed?—Yes, we want some Rule to say that they shall be all competent and thoroughly practical men.

29047. Therefore, the burthen of your complaint is that unpractical and incompetent men are being placed in responsible positions at some places?—Well, I had better put it "irresponsible men."

29048. (Mr. Cunynghame.) With regard to one question which you have been asked, would you give us the name of the mine where the incompetent men are being put on? We do not wish to single out any particular mine.

29049. Then, of course, it leaves it open to this. I sympathise with you entirely in regard to your not wishing to give the name, and I do not want to press you to give it, only, of course, if you say that somewhere there is somebody who is incompetent, but you will not say where, it cuts away all chance from the man of coming and saying, "I am competent," and of proving it. You do not give him a chance, as it were?—No.

29050. Therefore, of course, as you are aware, it must very much weaken the value of what you say, must it not?—Yes.

(Mr. Cunynghame.) I am not at all wishing to put it against you; I respect your motives. I will say no more—indeed, I do not think I can say any more upon that.

29051. (Mr. Wm. Abraham.) But let me ask you, as I did a witness yesterday, whether you will give that information privately to the Chairman?—Will you allow me to say this: take a man who is not competent to examine in the morning, and then suppose he is put to set timber up, do you consider he is a competent man?

29052. We do not want to go back to that. I understand that you have cases in your mind; all we ask now is whether you will give that information privately?—I can tell you that there are about seven or eight mines in the Cleveland district where there are assistants put under a deputy who are not responsible.

29053. I should like you to give the names to the Chairman—not to go down in print—because that would be of great assistance?—Well, if you do not see clearly the point that we put I do not think I can make it clear.

29054. We see the point that you are putting?—We will give you privately the names of six or seven mines where this business is carried on. I must draw a comparison again: there are four of you gentlemen sitting on that side of the table; now suppose that you are all practical and responsible men, then take three of you away and put three irresponsible men who are not competent to examine in the morning with you, and suppose that the other gentleman has charge of you three; he sends you to put up timber and he is supposed to inspect it, and he may get there probably some time in the day, but sometimes he may never go there at all, but may leave you to put it in. I put that gentleman as being responsible and that you are his three assistants, and he says to two of you, "Go and timber a district," and then you go to timber that district, and he takes the other assistant with him to go and timber another district, and he is not with you while you are putting that timber in. That is the case which I put.

29055. (Mr. Ratcliffe Ellis.) You represent the Cleveland Miners and Quarrymen's Association?—Yes.

29056. Does that Association pretty well include all the workers in the mines?—In Cleveland it does.

29057. What proportion are outside?—Not many now.

29058. You speak generally for the whole of the men who are engaged in the mines?—Yes.

29059. It is ironstone mines you are speaking of?—Yes.

29060. The statistics with reference to falls of roof look very bad in these reports: ironstone mines, 1940 per 1,000 persons employed. But how many persons are there employed?—I have not the exact number now before me, they are in the Blue Book; I think it would probably be nearly 9,000.

29061. So that you see when you take the number of accidents, which are really very few in number, it would appear to be a very large percentage of the persons employed?—Yes.

29062. Therefore, it really makes it look worse than it is. How many accidents were there last year?—Do you mean fatal accidents.

29063. Take fatal accidents to begin with, if you can tell me the number?—I am not sure whether it was 15.

29064. It was hardly 15, I think. In ironstone mines the fatal accidents from falls of roof and sides were 11, and the non-fatal accidents from falls of roof and sides were 30. So that you see there are not a great many, although the figures look very large?—Oh, that is not a title of them.

(Chairman.) These are only deaths.

29065. (Mr. Ratcliffe Ellis.) The total number of fatal accidents from falls of roof and sides in 1905 was 11 in the whole of the Cleveland Ironstone Mines. I do not suggest for a moment that we should not try to make the number less if we can, but it is not nearly as bad as

it looks when you say 1'940 per 1,000 persons employed ?—No.

29066. You suggest that in order to secure safety there should be a better qualified deputy to do the timbering ?—Yes. We require that there should be two responsible and practical men who should go together.

29067. I will ask you to refer for a moment to see what rules there are at present which apply to timbering, and see whether I have got them all: there is, first of all, General Rule 21 in the Act ?—Yes.

29068. That applies to ironstone: "The roof and sides of every travelling road and working place shall be made secure, and a person shall not, unless appointed for the purpose of exploring or repairing, travel or work in any such travelling road or working place which is not so made secure." That is a General Rule which applies to ironstone mines ?—Yes.

29069. And it is the duty of the certificated manager who is in charge of the mine to see that that regulation is carried out ?—Yes.

29070. That is the first General Rule. Now coming to your Special Rules, there is Rule 42, which provides: "The deputies are responsible for having ready, and putting into every working place a sufficient quantity of timber, brattice, and other materials; and for setting sufficient timber to afford the greatest possible safety to the workmen employed, and to report any deficiency of timber, brattice, or other material to the overman or back-overman, and they are to brattice all working places where necessary" ?—Yes.

29071. Then your Special Rule 38: "The deputy shall frequently examine the edges of the goaves and working juds"—what is a "working jud"; is that where the men work ?—It is where they are taking out pillars and preparing for a fall.

29072. "The deputy shall frequently examine the edges of the goaves and working juds, and where danger is apprehended no juds are to be drawn until the mine is done working." That is another timbering rule ?—Yes.

29073. Then your Special Rule 41, which says that it is the deputy's duty "immediately to withdraw every workman from any place rendered dangerous by noxious gases or absence of timber," and so on. His duty is to withdraw the men in case of danger ?—Yes.

29074. Special Rule 42 I have read to you. Then Special Rule 43: "To keep all tramways properly secured and in a working state, from the working faces to the inbye end of the station, or to the rolleyway." That is again a question of timbering ?—Yes.

29075. Special Rule 52: "Each workman in addition to the examination by the deputy, or other officer, must satisfy himself of the safety of his own working place before commencing, also whilst at work, and should the working place of any workman become unsafe from any cause, he is to discontinue working in it, and immediately go or send for the deputy. But if unsafe from want of timber being set, then, in the absence of the deputy, there being sufficient timber of proper lengths in the place, such workman to set it in order to keep himself safe, or cease to work and report the same to the overman or deputy," and so on ?—Yes.

29076. Then Special Rule 56 provides that "No one, unless authorised so to do, shall interfere with, or alter any timber set to support the roof or sides or any ventilating door, brattice, switches, or other appliances." Are all those rules, either General or Special, the rules relating to timbering ?—I think they pretty well cover it.

29077. Do you think that if those rules were carried out there is sufficient protection ?—I should say there was.

29078. So that what we have got to is the question whether or not proper means are taken to see that these rules are carried out ?—Yes.

29079. What sort of timbering is it that has to be done ?—In pillar working it is props.

29080. What height are they as a rule ?—It varies from 7 ft. upwards; we have one mine working at 16 or 18 ft., but I think the bulk of it would be about from 8 ft. to 9 ft. or 10 ft.

29081. Do you find that these accidents happen in the roads or in the working places more generally ?—In the working places.

29082. Have you anything to say against the way in which the roads are timbered ?—No, I do not think we have.

29083. You think that is satisfactorily done by the men, whether they are competent or incompetent, in the roads ?—Yes.

29084. What is the sort of timbering in the working places? You spoke about baulks ?—Where they are working in whole workings it is generally baulks let into the sides.

29085. What sizes of baulks ?—They drive in places from 12 to 13 and 14 ft.

29086. Are those baulks of such a size that they take two or three men to lift them ?—Yes, it takes two to lift them; it is very heavy timber and the roofs are as a rule not good.

29087. Then those are supported by props underneath ?—No, they generally cut a hole into the stone; it is strong in most places, but if it is necessary they put a prop under it.

29088. One man could not do that work ?—No, he could not do it.

29089. It requires two or three men ?—Yes.

29090. Is there always one man, the deputy, who is a competent man ?—Yes.

29091. What you want is that in addition to the deputy, who is now a competent man, there should be some other person as competent as the deputy to go with him ?—Yes.

29092. Where it takes three men to do it, you want all three men to be equally competent with the deputy ?—We have one competent man sometimes go where there are three going together.

29093. Is that your request—that although now the deputy is a competent man, yet in addition to the deputy the men who have to do the labour with him should be equally well qualified ?—The other man has to cut the baulk hole and to do his part of the business.

29094. Is it your request that the men who go to assist him—two or three, as the case may be—must be equally well qualified as the deputy ?—Yes, if they have to put in timber. If it is cutting away timber or anything of that kind, others can do it, but if it is timbering the place as we have stated in our Statement, where they put the timber in, they should be competent men.

29095. I want to see what this competent man has to do, because if he is nothing more than a labourer there is no need for him to pass an examination. Now what someone has to do is to cut a hole in the stone on each side ?—Yes.

29096. Then the baulk has to be lifted and put upon those supports ?—Yes.

29097. Part of what is required for that is strength ?—Yes.

29098. What is the skilful part of it ?—The skilful part of it is to cut the holes, and to know the nature of the top where they have to put the baulk, and one man is required to assist and look after the other in looking at the roof.

29099. But if you have one man there who is a skilled man to look at the roof and to himself give directions as to how to do the work, does it require the men who have to lift up the baulk and put it in its place to be equally skilled ?—If the man only had to lift it up, no, but he has to take a part in it.

29100. What part has he to take ?—He has to cut the hole and be there to assist the other man.

29101. But if there is a man there who looks after it and who understands the roof, the cutting of the hole is not a great matter of skill ?—No, but the majority of the mines have two skilled men together.

29102. But I want to see the necessity of it ?—There is a necessity. It requires all the eyesight and all the brain-power for them to look after it.

29103. You think one is not enough ?—Yes.

29104. Do you think there should be two skilled men ?—I think there should be two skilled men.

29105. And then the third man should be the labourer ?—There is no third man wanted in most of the mines.

29106. But if there is one wanted, would a labourer be enough ?—Yes.

29107. You think that if you have two skilled men, and it is necessary to have any other labourer there, he need not be skilled ?—He need not be.

29108. You suggest that you would secure this skilled man, this deputy, by an examination ?—Yes.

Mr.
J. Toyn.
7 Nov., 1907.

Mr.
J. Toyn.
7 Nov., 1907.

29109. I understand you agree that the present deputies are, in the main, skilled men?—In the main, I suppose they are.

29110. Well, you believe them to be so?—I think a good many of them are.

29111. Have they passed examinations?—No.

29112. Then what advantage would they get by passing examinations?—I should let them go on as they are.

29113. How is it that they have become skilled without having passed examinations?—Practice will make them skilled, some of them.

29114. Without passing examinations?—Practice makes some of them skilled, no doubt.

29115. Will examination without practice make a man skilled?—Not exactly; but you want to test him to know whether or not he is skilled enough to go into that responsible position.

29116. Do you know the examination for a second-class certificate?—I do not.

29117. So that you are not able to say whether that examination would be sufficient?—Oh, he would not want that. I would have an examination of a different kind; I would examine him in sounding. For instance, one man might go and sound, and perhaps there would be a thin layer and it would be very tight, and it might sound what is called "drummy," and he might sound a big lump and he would want to know whether that was good or bad. If he understands sounding, it would have a leaden and dead sound if it was bad, but if it was good it would ring off it.

29118. I suppose that is common knowledge to anybody who has done ironstone mining?—Well, it is knowledge to them who have had some experience of it, but outside it is not.

29119. These men who are appointed as deputies are appointed by the managers, are they not?—Yes.

29120. Therefore they must have satisfied the manager that they are competent?—I am not sure about that. He thinks they are competent.

29121. And they are competent as a rule?—As a rule, I should say they are.

29122. Is it not sufficient for a manager to in that way select men that he considers are competent in the same way as he has done in the past?—Not as he is selecting some of them now.

29123. One cannot legislate for exceptions, but generally speaking, however, these men have come to be deputies, they are competent men, and they have been selected by the managers. Is not that examination sufficient for you?—No. The men that we complain about now have been selected by the manager.

29124. How many deputies do you suppose there are in the Cleveland district?—I suppose there would be 300 or 400.

29125. How many are there that you think are incompetent?—We have not taken the numbers of them.

29126. Are there five?—Oh, yes.

29127. Are there a dozen?—There are more than 50.

29128. Have you any statistics to show that the number of accidents from falls of roof and sides are greater where these incompetent men are appointed?—No, we have not.

29129. Do you know anything about those statistics?—We do not.

29130. When you supply the names you will be able to find out that, will you not, and you will be able to see whether their want of skill makes itself self-evident by the larger number of accidents at the faces?—It may to a certain extent, but it does not follow that that is the whole of it.

29131. What else is there?—We have a lot of agencies at work now that did not use to be at work years ago.

29132. What else is there that you look at in order to see whether these men are skilled or not?—The way in which they do their work. I do not know whether you heard me mention a case in which I was at an inquest where a man was not allowed to examine in the morning, but he was competent enough to stop there; the deputy left at 20 minutes past 12, and then his assistant took charge when he went away, and yet his assistant was not competent to examine in the morning to sound the top, but he was competent to take charge after the deputy had gone.

29133. I heard that you said all that at the inquest?—Yes.

29134. And the Coroner did not agree with you?—The Coroner did not understand it, he was not a miner.

29135. Whether he understood it or not, he did not agree with your view?—Well he said he did not.

29136. The Jury brought in a verdict of accidental death?—The Jury brought in a verdict of accidental death, but there was no fault on the part of the deputy; that came out in the examination.

29137. Will you tell me what examination you suggest there should be? You say you will not leave it to the manager; you say you cannot trust him to select competent people to do this work. What is the sort of examination which you would suggest?—I would suggest an examination by the manager, the under-manager and two miners appointed by the men.

29138. But why? The men are not responsible in any way. The manager is responsible under the Act of Parliament if he does not select competent people?—Yes.

29139. There is no responsibility on the men?—No.

29140. But still you think the men ought to be invited to consider whether a deputy should be qualified or not?—Whether they consider him qualified.

29141. Supposing you have got a Board of that sort, would you propose to have equal numbers, or in what way are you going to decide the question?—I would not be particular—two or three on each side.

29142. Supposing the manager and his side of the Board were of opinion that the man was qualified, and the men's side of the Board were of opinion that the man was not qualified, how would you decide it then?—There would have to be, perhaps, a third party called in.

29143. An arbitrator to decide whether a deputy was qualified or not?—The difficulty might be got over in that way.

29144. Why should you object, if there is to be an examination, to have it decided by some altogether outside authority, as in the case of second-class certificates?—I should not have it as stiff as that, because the miners and men in that position would not be competent to go through a sort of theoretical examination.

29145. But if there is to be an examination, would it not be more satisfactory that it should be conducted by somebody outside both the employer and the workmen?—I think the manager and the workmen at the place could do it the best.

29146. You do not think the manager is competent to do it?—I think the manager is competent if he would only appoint the men, but if the men had a voice in the matter as well, they know the man and know what is required.

29147. Do you think the manager is competent to do it?—He is competent.

29148. Then why not let him do it?—Because we do not agree with the way in which he is doing it now.

29149. In some cases you do agree?—In some cases we do.

29150. There is a very large proportion of the cases in which you do agree?—Yes; in some mines we have not a fault to find with it.

29151. In other cases you do not think the manager is competent to select them. If you will be good enough to send to the Secretary of the Commission a note of the places where these incompetent men are, then it will be possible to ascertain whether there are more accidents under their management than in the other cases?—I should not like to say that there are more accidents. We try to prevent them.

29152. Yes, I suppose everybody would do that. At any rate, you will furnish that information?—Yes.

29153. I think I understood you rightly to say that no person should be appointed a deputy who had not worked as a stone-getter?—Yes.

29154. Would that be a qualification in addition to the examination?—It would qualify him to pass the examination.

29155. But supposing he had not that experience, you would not allow him to sit to be examined?—I do not think I should allow him to be examined.

29156. Is the work of getting stone necessary to qualify a man for examining the roof?—It makes him become acquainted with the nature of the roof.

Mr.
J. Toyn.

7 Nov., 1907.

29157. You think that experience is of advantage to him?—Yes, I think that is the best experience he can have.

29158. You would make that a condition of his sitting for examination?—Yes.

29159. Then no man could be a deputy, however well qualified, who had not worked at stone-getting?—In my estimation, he would not.

29160. So that you would exclude from the chance of being appointed as deputy any person who had not been an actual workman in getting stone?—I would.

29161. Now as to the chargeman and driller. The chargeman, I understand, is the man who charges the shot?—Yes.

29162. And I suppose the examination has to be made by somebody before the men are allowed to go to work?—Yes, before the fillers are allowed to go to work.

29163. Who does make the examination?—The chargeman.

29164. Is he a competent man as a rule?—As a rule, I think they are competent.

29165. Do you want to make any alteration in his qualification?—I have known men appointed that were not competent to drill. Of course, in the morning the deputy examines the place, and then the man goes in with the drill and he has charge of another young man, who is what they call the "drill changer," and I have known men come in there, and I have had it pointed out by a manager that those men have had no experience, and they have told me that they were going on and how much they were making in a day.

29166. Are you speaking now from your experience or from information given to you?—Information given to me.

29167. Are you speaking of anything like the universal practice or of a very few exceptions?—Of a very few exceptions. We have not much fault to find.

29168. As a rule, you think the chargemen are qualified to do the work they have to do?—As a rule I believe they are.

29169. With reference to the inspection, you think there ought to be an inspection at least every six months?—Yes.

29170. And that it should be more complete than the inspector makes now?—Yes.

29171. The Chairman has suggested to you whether you would be in favour of the appointment of a lower grade of inspectors to do this work?—Yes.

29172. Do you propose that such inspectors should be appointed by the Home Office?—Yes.

29173. Should they be required to qualify themselves?—To a certain extent, to see that they are competent for the place.

29174. Do you consider that their duties should be merely examining the roof and sides?—Principally that.

29175. Would they have to examine for gas?—Occasionally they would.

29176. Would they have to understand the measurement of the air, the ventilation and other matters?—Well, that would be a question. I do not know whether they would be capable of doing that.

29177. Why should they not be?—Of course they could soon measure the air.

29178. Do you not think it is desirable that if a man is appointed as inspector he should be fully qualified to do all the duties of an inspector?—I would suggest a thoroughly practical man, and that he should be competent to see that all was safe in every respect.

29179. Then he would of course have to be trained pretty much as an inspector is trained?—Not exactly as far as they are trained now—the theoretical part.

29180. What is the advantage of having a less qualified inspector than you have at the present time?—Well, the inspectors we have now have not been practical miners.

29181. But if they understand the working of mines is it not sufficient?—But no man does unless he has been a practical miner.

29182. Then is your view that no person should be appointed as an inspector of mines who has not actually worked as an ironstone getter?—Yes, for this class that we are speaking about.

29183. Then for the other class you would not make that requirement?—No, I could hardly do that.

29184. Why not?—I think that a chief inspector wants to be in such a position that he could put a first-class manager right.

29185. Still he must understand it himself, must he not?—Yes. He will only know it the same as the manager does; there are not many of them that have ever been practical men.

29186. Then your view is, at any rate, that although the chief inspector and his assistant need not have been practical working men, yet with regard to these sub-inspectors, if they were appointed, although they must qualify themselves by passing an examination, they must also have been practical working miners?—Yes; and if they could pass the other examination I would allow them to do so.

29187. Certainly, there is no reason why a man's class should prevent him getting to the highest post if he is equal to the job. That is your view: you think that would be an improvement?—Yes, and I think that if you had good thorough practical working men, they would do some real good practical inspection.

29188. They would of course be surrounded with all the restrictions that an inspector of mines is surrounded by as to the use which he can make of any information he gets—they would have to be entirely independent?—Certainly—independent of all parties.

29189. (*Dr. Haldane.*) Have you many accidents from blasting?—We have had accidents from blasting, but they are, comparatively speaking, very few.

29190. So that the method used is, on the whole, safe, considering the enormous amount of blasting done?—Yes. It is pellet-powder—compressed powder—that is used: it is in 2-ounce cartridges, and it is much safer than the loose powder used to be. There are not many accidents in blasting—scarcely any.

29191. How is it fired?—It is fired with patent squibs: we never fire with fuses. They use a wood rammer to put the powder up with, and a copper or composition needle pricker and stemmer: they have to put the powder in with a wood rammer, and they are very careful indeed.

29192. Have you ever heard of any men being affected by the smoke, I mean being made ill by the powder smoke?—Yes, often; but not suddenly ill.

29193. Have you known them to get headaches, and so on?—Yes.

29194. Does that happen often nowadays?—Yes, it still occurs to a certain extent: it is not so bad as it used to be.

29195. In what sort of places would that happen—in the stalls?—As a rule the places are worked about 12 or 13 ft. wide, and the strata varies from 7 ft. to 10 ft. or 10 ft. 6 in. generally. I think the Cleveland main seam is about 8 ft. thick, but at Eston they are working it from about 16 to 21 ft.

29196. Yes, they are very high there.—That is a very high mine, but that is an exception.

29197. On the whole you think the ventilation is good?—Yes: it is better than it used to be. Of course they have a difficulty now when they are working out pillars: they cannot keep their air-courses up and their stoppings up, and everything, so well as they can in whole workings. We have some mines that are "whole" working: they are not all "brokens," but most of them are.

29198. I think on the whole the life of an ironstone miner is a very healthy one, is it not? It has that reputation?—Well it probably is not so unhealthy as some others.

29199. You have some accidents, of course; but I mean apart from accidents you have nothing much to complain of, have you?—No, I do not think we have.

29200. You have no special troubles there, have you? Have you any cases of what they call miners' nystagmus—trouble with the eyes?—The coal miners sometimes have it.—No, I do not think we have any difficulty about that.

29201. And you have no trouble with the dust?—No.

29202. It does not do any harm to anyone, apparently?—No. There is sometimes a little trouble with too much water.

29203. (*Mr. Smillie.*) You have had a long experience as a practical miner?—Yes, I have had 20 years' experience in the mines as a miner.

Mr.
J. Toyn.
7 Nov., 1907

29204. You represent the limestone quarrymen?—Yes, those who are getting stone for flux for the furnaces: it is all in our iron trade.
29205. Have you had any practical experience as a quarryman?—No, I have not as a limestone quarryman.
29206. Has your long experience as a trade union leader amongst them given you experience of it?—Yes: I have visited all the quarries many times.
29207. It would not be correct to say that you did not understand the position of quarrymen?—No, I fairly well understand the quarries.
29208. Would it be correct to say that a practical coal-miner can understand the practical part of ironstone mining?—It would take him a good bit to do it.
29209. There are many coal miners who have worked in ironstone mines, and there are many ironstone miners who have worked in coal mines?—Yes.
29210. So that in that case they have had experience of both?—Yes.
29211. So far as the nature of the roof is concerned, a coal-miner would have a better opportunity of recognising the danger in an ironstone mine than a stranger who had no experience in a coal mine?—Yes.
29212. I think so far as the sounding of stone is concerned, the same thing applies in an ironstone mine as in a coal mine?—To a certain extent it would apply—to a greater extent, I might say.
29213. I mean that the nature of the roof in coal mines varies from place to place almost as much as it would in different places in ironstone mines?—Yes.
29214. I think your strong point is that deputies, in addition to having the necessary qualifications, should have three years' experience at the face?—Yes.
29215. Is it your opinion that the most valuable experience is that which is gained at the working face?—That is so.
29216. So far as the nature of the roof and also the dangers arising from shot-firing and other things are concerned, that experience is gained at the face more than at any other employment?—There is no doubt about that. Might I explain to you that the tops vary so, and the backs, that is the seams in the roof; there are some what we call saddle-backs, and they are very dangerous indeed: there is a great difficulty in understanding the nature of those backs.
29217. Sometimes it is nearly impossible to find out a saddle-back even by sounding. It may sound all right on the top, but it may fall out without giving any previous warning?—That is so.
29218. But a skilled miner very often knows when he comes in amongst those from the nature of the roof, and he can see from the nature of the roof that he is amongst dangerous saddle-backs?—Yes.
29219. You think that every deputy before being appointed should, as I have said, have three years' experience, and should prove also by examination his qualification for becoming a deputy?—Yes.
29220. That is to say, in the interest of his own safety and for the safety of the workmen under his charge?—Yes, quite as much for himself as for the others under his charge.
29221. Is it your opinion that the deputies are more responsible, as a matter of fact, for the safety of the working miners than even the manager himself?—That is so, a considerable deal more.
29222. And that if it is necessary for a colliery manager to hold a certificate of competency, it is still more necessary that a deputy should hold one?—It is, because the management of a mine begins with the deputy in the morning and finishes with him, and some of the managers do not go in more than once a week.
29223. I suppose there is no longwall working there?—No. It is all pillar and stall—board and pillar.
29224. (*Dr. Haldane.*) It would be quite impossible to work longwall in the thick seams, would it not?—Yes, I think it would.
29225. They are tremendously thick seams?—Yes.
29226. (*Mr. Smillie.*) I suppose the working of the pillars is the most dangerous part of the mining in your district—the taking out of the pillars?—We think it is.
29227. What depth are the mines generally?—Some of them work in on the inclined plane, and I think the deepest mine in our district is about 124 fathoms.
29228. There would be a considerable weight on in taking out the pillars at that depth?—Yes, but they are probably worse where there is the less covering on—for taking out the pillars.
29229. The roof is not so good or so strong?—It is not so good or so strong. It is stronger in-by.
29230. In taking out your pillars, the men put up the props to keep up the roof as they take out the pillars?—Yes.
29231. And then remove those props afterwards?—Yes, they draw their juds and let the roof in.
29232. That is also very dangerous?—Drawing the juds is very dangerous.
29233. That is also done under the charge of a skilled deputy, I suppose, or a deputy who is supposed to be skilled?—Yes. Mr. Stephens could tell you more about that because he is a deputy, and he has to draw juds frequently.
29234. If a third grade of inspectors were established by law, you would have no objection, I suppose, to their holding a first-class certificate of competency? Provided that they had the practical experience, as one part of their qualification, would there be any objection to their holding a first-class certificate?—Not the slightest.
29235. You are aware that a large number of ironstone and coal miners do hold first-class certificates at the present time?—Yes.
29236. And there would be no difficulty in getting thoroughly skilled and practical men who did hold such certificates, if there was a grade established of that kind?—Not the slightest. We have two or three men who hold second-class certificates now working in the face.
29237. Do any of your miners hold first-class certificates?—I believe we have one.
29238. Do you carry out General Rule 38 as far as regards appointing Inspectors yourself to make examinations?—Yes, we do so in a number of mines, and we are trying to encourage the men to do it all over, and we pay them out of the funds of our Association.
29239. You are aware that that rule lays it down that they must be practical working miners?—Yes.
29240. Do you think that that was a wise provision for the Government to make, that they must be practical working miners?—I do.
29241. It ensured, at least, that they had the skill which you think comes from practice?—Yes.
29242. Are you aware that that rule is interpreted in your district to mean that they must be working at the time of their appointment? Could you appoint men who had been practical working miners who were not then employed?—Well, we never do.
29243. Consequently, you do not know what position your managers would take up if that were done?—No, we do not. They generally appoint men who are working in the mine which they have to inspect. I believe the rule gives power to appoint miners from other mines to come and inspect, but they never do so; they always appoint men out of their own mine.
29244. So far as your own knowledge goes, has the appointment of those men from time to time led to greater safety?—I mean to a better observance of the Mines Act?—Yes, we think so. Of course, we cannot tell; we see their reports, and we print them. They make very close inspection, and in some mines it takes them three days to do it.
29245. Of course, if they find anything wrong or any danger, a copy of their report has to be forwarded to the mines inspector?—Yes; the mine manager has a report book, and things are put in the report, and if there is anything wrong they point it out to him and ask him to rectify it.
29246. As a matter of fact, really, an extension of the present system is what you propose, but that it should be set up by the Government?—Yes.
29247. May we take it that, the inspectors having a practical knowledge, as you suggest, they would not interfere in any way with the management of the mine, but that they would report to the chief inspector?—Yes.
29248. You would not give them the powers which are at present conferred upon chief inspectors, but you would make them assistant-inspectors, who would report the results of their examinations to the chief inspector?—Yes.
29249. And then he should take any action which he thought necessary?—Yes. We think it would fill up a

gap: that the inspectors as they are now deal more with the theoretical part of it, and we would put a practical man in so as to connect the whole thing together.

29250. You think that a thorough examination of your mines, made at least once in six months, and of course oftener if required, would lead to greater safety?—Yes, I think so.

29251. You have no objection, if it would be good for the district, to an extension of it to all mines, I suppose?—Not the slightest.

29252. You say you have 20 mines?—I think there are about 20.

29253. I daresay they vary in extent?—They do.

29254. What is the average number of men employed in them—200?—I daresay in Eston there would be nearly 1,000 men. Some mines have about 300, and some 700: they vary.

29255. From 300 to 1,000? Yes, and there are less than 300 in some of them.

29256. You have given this matter some thought, and you believe that one inspector devoting the whole of his time to Cleveland, Whitby and Rosedale Abbey Districts, could thoroughly inspect those 20 mines?—I think he could do it fairly well.

29257. You say that at the present time, in the case of some of your inspectors who are practical men and who work in the mine and have considerable knowledge of the mine, two men took three days to make an examination?—Yes, it takes three days.

29258. That would be in the case of a large mine?—Yes, it is a mine belonging to Messrs. Pease & Partners. We have had reports sent in just recently, showing that it took them three days to inspect all the working places and air-courses, and we think there should be an inspector appointed to cover the ground which they have covered.

29259. Your chief complaint is not that the present inspectors do not do their work well?—No, I believe they do it very well.

29260. But that it is impossible that they can do it—that they have far too much to do?—Yes, they cannot do it. I am not complaining about their not working hard: I think they do.

29261. You think that perhaps £200 a year would cover the necessary expense so far as your own particular district is concerned?—I should think it would.

29262. And that that money would be well spent?—I do think so.

29263. You believe it would lead to greater safety and probably to the saving of life?—Yes.

29264. (Mr. Cunynghame.) You have told us that these mines are inspected by the men under Rule 38?—Yes.

29265. Have they ever in their reports pointed out the incompetency of some of the deputies?—No: they have nothing to do with that.

29266. That matter would not come under their consideration?—No.

29267. You have not stated how often the inspection

was made. I suppose it was made at irregular times?—They could make it once a month if they chose.

29268. How often do they make it?—Well, it just varies. If some men come to the lodge meeting and say "Our district is getting a bit smoky," or something like that, they appoint two men to go round. I do not think there is any particular time when they do it, but they do it frequently at some of the mines, and we are asking them to do it at all of them, because we think the money is well spent.

29269. (Mr. Ratcliffe Ellis.) You say that you print the reports of those inspections?—Yes.

29270. Could they be supplied to the Commission?—Yes, I daresay we could send you a copy or two of them, at any rate. Our secretary generally prints them at the bottom of other business, but we could supply you with some, I know.

29271. (Mr. Smillie.) Might I ask whether those men are paid by the miners who appoint them, or whether they are paid by the Association?—They are paid by the Association.

29272. And you are willing to pay the expenses wherever there are men appointed by any of your miners?—Yes.

29273. Proving that you have given every encouragement for the carrying out of the system of inspection by the men?—Yes; I may say I frequently advocate in my quarterly circular that the men should appoint them, because I think money that is spent to prolong life and to protect it is well spent.

29274. (Chairman.) May I ask whether those men are always taken from the mine which they are sent down to inspect, or do you take men from other mines?—I think they are always taken from the mine which they inspect. I have not known a case yet in which the men were brought from other mines.

29275. You do not suppose the manager would make any objection supposing you thought one particular man was an especially good man for the purpose? Would the miners object to your sending him down another mine than the mine which he himself was working in?—I do not know that the mine managers would object. Some of them might possibly say "Have not we men competent enough in our own mine," but I do not think they would object.

29276. You have never done that as a matter of fact: you have always sent men down to inspect the particular mine that they are working in?—Yes.

29277. (Mr. Wm. Abraham.) Do you know of any instances where the reports made by these men have been called for at inquests as proof of the condition of a mine at certain times?—No.

29278. My point is this: as a rule those reports made by the men are considered to be as reliable as possible?—Yes.

29279. So that the quality or the grade of men does not prevent the reports being of importance?—They are generally considered satisfactory: in fact I have not heard a complaint against them. I have never heard a complaint that reports were not satisfactory.

Mr.
J. Toyn.
7 Nov., 1907.

Mr. WILLIAM STEPHENS, called and examined.

29280. (Chairman.) I understand you are a mines deputy. You have heard the evidence given by Mr. Toyn with regard to the qualifications of a deputy. Do you agree with him that there should be some sort of examination?—Yes, I think there should.

29281. And that there should be certificates of competency given?—Yes, I think there should be some kind of examination to test a deputy's qualifications.

29282. Do you think that he should not be allowed to sit for this examination until he has had that three years' experience?—That is so.

29283. With regard to who should conduct the examination, do you agree that it should be conducted by two persons on behalf of the management, and two persons on behalf of the miners?—I may say that is a matter we, perhaps, have not so carefully considered, probably, as we might have done; although we have partially agreed that that would be perhaps a reasonable way for the selection of a deputy.

29284. Have you any fault to find in general with the selection of deputies made by managers? Do you think as a rule that the best men are chosen for deputies by the managers?—Yes, generally speaking, they are.

29285. As a rule the managers, you think, are careful to choose the best men?—Yes.

29286. Generally they do so in their own interest?—Generally speaking.

29287. Do you find that you have incompetent men placed under you sometimes and pressed upon you as assistants?—Personally, no; but there are cases as presented by Mr. Toyn this morning where pressure is brought to bear upon deputies to accept assistants.

29288. People whom you do not consider quite competent to perform the duties?—That is so; who are not competent for that position.

29289. I suppose you would say not only persons who are nominally deputies, but also persons who are assistants,

Mr.
W. Stephens.

Mr.
W. Stephens
7 Nov., 1907.

and consequently have to perform, on occasions, deputies' duties, ought to have deputies' certificates?—The assistants?

29290. Yes. Do you suggest that?—If they have gone through the proper probation and necessary examination, then, of course, it would be all right. The fact that they are assistant-deputies would not make them qualified unless they had had experience.

29291. But an assistant-deputy may be called on to perform all the duties of a deputy. He may have charge of a mine, and while in charge may have to see to the safety of a roof?—I do not think that the management would allow an assistant-deputy not considered by them properly qualified to perform those duties.

29292. Mr. Toyn has said on occasions he knows the assistant deputy has been left in charge by a deputy for some hours. If a man is left in charge by a deputy, ought not he to be a man who has passed a deputy's examination himself?—He should be.

29293. There might be a great many more people who had passed the deputy's examination than there is room for as deputies, and anybody who passed the examination might be qualified to act as an assistant-deputy?—That is so.

29294. You agree with Mr. Toyn, and you think as regards timbering at all events two skilled deputies should always go together?—From experience I find that is so. It is necessary that two skilled deputies should go together.

29295. You would be content if one man was nominally a deputy and the other an assistant-deputy, providing the assistant-deputy had passed the examination. He would be then a qualified man?—I do not see how he could be an assistant-deputy if he had passed the examination.

29296. There might be a large number of persons qualified as deputies, but yet there would be no room for them as deputies. You would say then that two people who were to look after the roof should always be two deputies, and not only two people who passed the deputies' examination, but two people who occupied the responsible position of deputies themselves?—Properly appointed for that purpose.

29297. It would not be sufficient for a deputy to go about with an assistant-deputy who had passed the examination and in course of time hoped to be a deputy himself?—I do not say as a temporary arrangement. It perhaps would not be wise to draw a hard and fast line and say possibly for a short period that it would not be all right; but to appoint a man and an assistant permanently is a thing we find a great deal of fault with. I do not say for a day or two that it would not be all right in case of a vacancy or anything like that.

29298. You must not have too many persons as assistant-deputies, because that would interfere with the flow of promotion?—Perhaps it would be as well to explain more fully what is meant by an assistant-deputy. Those are not men appointed as assistant-deputies, but they are labourers who are working about the mine, and when there is a vacancy in the face one of those is taken and put in to fill a vacancy, not appointed actually assistant-deputy. He simply goes with this deputy as a labourer in the face, but not understood as an assistant-deputy, although of course he assists the deputy in his work.

29299. Sometimes I understand a deputy will leave the working face before the end of a shift, and leave somebody in charge. The person he leaves in charge, according to your view, ought to be a person who is sufficiently qualified to be a deputy himself?—That is so, and if he is not a deputy he should not be in charge of a district for any time.

29300. You would not allow anybody but a person duly appointed a deputy as well as having a certificate?—A deputy would be wrong in leaving a district without somebody in charge—some qualified person, I mean.

29301. A qualified person need not be a person who has been absolutely appointed as deputy?—If a man was working with me in the day, and was not qualified to take charge of the district, I should not go home until the miners had cleared out.

29302. You might have men with first-class certificates to be managers of the mine, but yet they are not managers of the mine, they are working in the mine; and in the same way you might have a man at the working face, and the deputy might say "You have passed your deputy's certificate; take charge of this place while I am away"?—If he was properly qualified that might be so. He is a

qualified deputy in a sense, and there would be no question about leaving him in charge of the district.

29303. No man should be allowed to set or put in timber who had no practical knowledge of timbering. You have all signed this statement?—Yes.

29304. How do you propose to find out whether a man has practical knowledge of timbering? What would be the qualification?—It could only be found out by actual practice.

29305. Have you anything to complain of in regard to that matter—I mean men with no practical knowledge being employed to put up the timber?—Only where complaint has been made this morning, where two men should be doing the work there is only one.

29306. Your complaint is not that two unskilled men are employed, but very often a skilled and an unskilled man?—That is so.

29307. You say it ought to be two skilled men?—Yes.

29308. You say that none but practical men should be allowed to examine places that miners have to work in before they commence their shift's work. Surely that is a matter that the managers see to, that none but practical men examine before a shift?—I think that is carried out. I do not think any shift of miners would commence to work without the place being examined.

29309-11. You have nothing to complain of in that respect?—No, the places are inspected by a practical man before the miners commence their work. Before you leave the deputy question, I should like to give some reason why we think that two experienced men should work together. It is very often the case that deputies, in the course of their shift, are called to examine a place where the roof is very bad, and it is necessary sometimes for one man to watch while the other man works. There is just as much skill required to be a watcher as a worker, and where a place is very bad one, it is often the case that there is great danger. If two experienced men are together, one to watch while the other worked, I think it is better. Often the top is so bad that you are both afraid to work at once. One would sound it, and the other would see, if necessary, to getting the timber in. In the case of an inexperienced man it would be dangerous for the deputy to engage in doing that kind of work.

29312. I should have thought that greater experience was required by the person watching than the person doing the actual work?—You want experience in both cases, working and watching. With regard to the sounding of the roofs, I think a question was asked by Mr. Smillie. In a good many cases in the ironstone mines the roof is so high that you can only judge of the top by sounding it with a sounder. In the coal mines you refer to it is quite easy to sound with one hand, and feel the motion with the other. In the case of the roof being 10 or 15 feet from the bottom, you have to judge of the nature of the top by the sensation caused by the sounding. It requires considerable experience for a man to be able to tell when the roof does really require timber—not so much putting in the timber, as to understand the nature of the top, just when and where timber should be put in to keep the top safe. I confirm what Mr. Toyn has said, that without considerable experience of working in the face, it would be impossible to form an opinion as to the nature of the top.

29313. Do you think that experience could not be got very well under three years?—I do not say three years. There is a great deal of difference in men. Some get more experience in 12 months than others do in five years.

29314. You think that a good average would be three years?—That is so.

29315. Have you anything more you wish to say about timbering?—No, I think that covers it.

29316. Then with regard to the power machine miners. Do you agree with Mr. Toyn's view that there is no objection to employing, as I understand, inexperienced fillers, whose work is of a character that anybody almost can do, but that no inexperienced person should be permitted to take charge of a machine, or be entrusted to fire shots, except they have had at least three years' experience in getting stone in the face to prove their fitness?—The same amount of experience would be necessary to understand the nature of the tops for the machine men with the fillers, as well as for the deputies who have to go in to examine the first thing in the morning. A number of fillers are inexperienced men, and unless an experienced man is in charge, it would expose them to serious danger.

29317. Do you think it would require three years' experience in getting stone at the face to enable a man to take proper charge of the machine?—I do not think Mr. Toyn has given anything unreasonable. It requires a man of considerable experience.

29318. They must know not only how to drill, but have knowledge of the roof?—That is so.

29319. Just the same as the deputies would have?—Yes.

29320. The qualifications for a man in charge of a machine would be the same qualifications as for a deputy as regards a knowledge of the roof and sides?—Yes, because he is responsible for the men following in filling. When the machine goes out and the shots are fired, that man has to certify that the place is fit for the fillers to follow in. It is necessary to have fair experience for that.

29321. At the same time he has nothing to do with the timbering?—No.

29322. He need not be an expert timberer?—That is so.

29323. He ought to be able to tell when anything is the matter with the roof?—Quite so.

29324. Have you anything more to say about persons in charge of the machine?—No.

29325-29. (*Mr. Smillic.*) Will you clear up the point with regard to the Special Rule 65 which refers to the charge-man. He has to examine the place after the shots are fired?—There is a man with the machine and a man who fires the shot.

29330-1. (*Chairman.*) You have two men: the same man that charges does not fire the shot?—The man that drills the hole with the machine does not fire the shots. There is a man specially appointed for firing the shots, but they work as mates, and share the money earned.

29332. Do you consider at present that any considerable number of shot-firers are incompetent?—I should not say really that a considerable number are incompetent.

29333. Do you think most of them have had the three years' experience which you consider desirable?—They have by this time. When the machines were first introduced they had not. Now I do not suppose there are any working a machine who have not had three years' experience with the machine.

29334. You have nothing to complain of?—Personally, I do not know of a single case.

29335. Do you know a single case where an inexperienced man has had charge of shot-firing?—No.

29336. (*Dr. Haldane.*) Are these electrical or compressed air?—Both, we have both electrical machines and compressed air.

29337. They have taken the place of hand machines?—Yes.

29338. They are all rotary machines?—Yes.

29339. (*Chairman.*) Do you wish to say any more about Rule 65 with regard to the charge-men and shot-firers?—I think Mr. Toyn fairly well covered that question, I do not want to repeat what he said.

29340. As regards inspection, you heard what Mr. Toyn said about that. He thought that there was not enough inspection, and that one working-man inspector should be appointed to look after these Cleveland iron mines?—Certainly. I think it would be a great advantage.

29341. Do you consider that the inspection is insufficient now?—I do.

29342. The best plan would be not to appoint an assistant for the whole district, coal mines and all, but you think you ought to have a working-man whose duties should be simply to look after the iron mines?—We think that would be a great advantage to the Cleveland district. If the inspector comes he cannot go through the whole of the mine when he visits the district.

29343. Perhaps you agree with Mr. Toyn that it is a great advantage that you should have inspection under General Rule 38?—What is that rule?

29344. The rule with regard to workmen's inspection?—Yes.

29345. How often is that done?—Perhaps the advantage of a separate inspector would be that the man would be really an independent inspector. You understand the position of a workman as a rule. He examines, but sometimes those inspectors do not give the actual report that they would on account of their position as working men. That might be jeopardised.

29346. Do you think that is so?—I do not say that is so, but there is that fear naturally with the men. Sometimes, perhaps, they feel afraid to take the course they probably would with respect to inspection.

29347. Has anybody ever complained to you to that effect?—No.

29348. Has anybody ever complained that he has been afraid to make a truthful report?—No.

29349. Do they often make reports calling attention to defects. I mean these workmen when they inspect under Rule 38?—They make their report of course.

29350. Do those reports often contain notices of defects?—Not often.

29351. You think probably not so often as they might?—Probably so. We almost think that is the case.

29352. Still they do occasionally call attention to them?—They call attention to certain defects.

29353. You are not aware in your experience of any man having suffered from having drawn attention to defects in the working of a mine?—No.

29354. Do you agree with Mr. Toyn that the managers are getting more lax than they used to be in the selection of deputies and other men in authority? Mr. Toyn appeared to think that some years ago the management was more careful in the men they appointed as deputies. Do you agree with that view?—As Mr. Toyn pointed out in the illustration he gave this morning, in allowing certain districts to work with one practical man and an assistant.

29355. That is a new thing?—Yes, that is new. It has come into operation the last few years. I quite think the managers are anxious to secure the safety of the workmen in every way, but as far as we are concerned we feel that it is decreasing the efficiency of the management, as the deputies have a very great deal of responsibility with respect to the management of the mine. We think it does not keep the management up to the standard it would with two practical men.

29356. Do you agree with Mr. Toyn that these mines ought to be inspected totally every six months, and that all the working places, air courses and tram roads should be inspected?—I think that is quite long enough, six months. In a mine working in Cleveland great alteration would take place in six months.

29357. Now that you have come to the point of having to take out pillars, you consider that mining is more dangerous than before?—They certainly have the appearance of more danger; unless there is greater care exercised there will be a great many more accidents. I would like to mention one point with regard to the decrease of accidents referred to this morning. Some years ago a lot of strangers were being introduced into the Cleveland mines, and the probabilities were that there were accidents then that would not have occurred if they were practical men as they are to-day. The men working in the Cleveland mines have been working there from boys, and they have been acquainted with the mines up to becoming miners. If strangers were introduced, as they were 20 years ago, there is no doubt that the accidents would considerably increase.

29358. With regard to the statistics I drew attention to at the beginning of the day about the surface accidents, those statistics are compiled from very few men, only about 1,500 men, and it so happens that there were three accidents last year which brought the percentage up enormously. I find on comparing the percentage for this year with the percentage in former years that the surface accidents in ironstone mines do not compare unfavourably with the number in coal mines?—I am glad to hear that. We were surprised at the statement you made, but it has proved to be an exceptional year in the Cleveland district.

29359. There are so few men that the percentage of accidents appears very high?—We were rather concerned about that matter.

29360. The under-ground accidents are rather more than in coal mines, and that is a matter of great importance?—Yes.

29361. (*Mr. Cunynghame.*) Are there any rules in force in your district about the spaces apart at which the timber should be placed?—No, we had an exemption from that rule. An Act was passed with respect to timbering in mines, and we asked for exemption from that Act.

Mr.
W. Stephens.
7 Nov., 1907.

Mr.
W. Stephens.
7 Nov., 1907.

29362. Why did you ask for that exemption?—In many parts of our district you might work without any timber at all being put in; but in other parts of the district you want three times as much timber as the law would provide for.

29363. The law permitted in certain places that there should be a rule that timbering was to be quite close together, and in other places that timbering should not be put at all. The law did not compel you to have a uniform space right through, and yet you applied for exemption?—Yes, we did.

29364. Do not you think it would be wiser to alter that and have what is called "systematic timbering"?—I do not think systematic timbering necessary in the Cleveland mines.

29365. Why not?—There is no necessity for so much timber as is required by the law in some places, and in other places three times as much is necessary.

29366. In places where it was necessary to have a lot of timber, would it not be better to have systematic timbering for such a place?—We put in as much timber as is required. I do not think that there are complaints as to the amount of timbering put in. We timber the ground according to the requirements of the nature of the ground.

29367. I thought some accidents were due, seven at all events, to the fact that timbering was not sufficiently done in certain places.

29368. (*Dr. Haldane.*) How do the accidents usually occur—from falls of roofs and sides? Is it after the blast or before?—Sometimes. Supposing this is the width, you baulk it as close as you can to the face where the stone is got, and so much stone must be got out before you get the timber in. It is often the case before you get more timber ready the roof comes down. If you get 100 yards square you timber as much as you can, but it often happens that the timber breaks down. The top is of such a brittle nature, and there is only a very small place, and if a small piece falls it kills a man. We have known cases where pieces of 9 or 10 lbs. weight have killed a man.

29369. (*Mr. Cunyngame.*) If it is not due to the want of setting proper timber that the accidents occur, what is it due to?—It is due mainly to the brittle nature at the top. There is no doubt about that.

29370. Is it unpreventible?—I do not think any accidents are unpreventible; but you can see after an accident has occurred in many cases that it might have been prevented.

29371. What can be done? You say the timber that is put up is sufficient?—Yes.

29372. What else can be done to prevent these accidents? The roof is treacherous and pieces fall off in spite of the most careful timbering. What can be done to prevent that happening?—I say exercise all the care we possibly can by employing the most competent men that can be employed for the purpose of examination and timbering.

29373. I gather from you that the men are competent at the present time?—They are. Do you say they were not or they were?

29374. I understand it is your opinion that the men are competent?—Yes, as a rule.

29375. There does not seem very much more that can be done?—Perhaps there is not in that respect.

29376. I am only anxious to know?—I understand; that is right.

29377. With regard to the examination of deputies, as a general rule, all over England the plan of examining workmen has not been generally adopted. It would be rather an unusual thing, would it not?—In what respect.

29378. It would be rather unusual examining people in their duties. For instance, take the men engaged in making steel in the crucible process. I do not know whether you know it. They do not pass an examination?—No, I suppose not.

29379. This suggestion of an examination is rather unusual?—For deputies.

29380. You are of opinion with steel that it is unusual?—There has been no examination previously.

29381. Your proposal is that there should be an examination for deputies?—A practical examination.

29382. Who should conduct that examination?—I should say the manager of a mine ought to know before he selects a deputy that he is competent.

29383. I agree with you, but I want to come to the examination and what is your view. I doubt whether an inspector would be the best person. For instance, take the present Government Inspector of Mines, would he be the best person to examine him?—No, I should say not.

29384. Who would you have to examine them?—A suggestion was made this morning, but we have not perhaps sufficiently considered that question. On the face of it, it appears to me that the management or the manager of a mine should be the person who should be capable of selecting the very best man he has for that position.

29385. This kind of rule should be adopted, that no man should be employed as a deputy until the manager of the mine had certified in his opinion, in writing if you like, that he was capable and proper to be a deputy. Is that the sort of thing you are aiming at?—Yes; I would add also the three years' experience Mr. Toyn mentioned this morning.

29386. You would make that an absolute rule—three years' experience?—I do not think much less than three years would be sufficient to gain the amount of experience.

29387. Would you make it a hard-and-fast rule?—You would have to say a person of experience.

29388. I have known people with five years' experience who never seemed to be able to do anything, sweep a room for that matter?—As I said before, there are some men who will gain as much experience in twelve months as others will in five years.

29389. We know there are accidents, and that you are impressed with the necessity of choosing proper deputies, and you want the greatest possible care to be taken that proper deputies are chosen?—That is so.

29390. You would favour any rule that can be brought about to secure that?—Yes.

29391. You are not prepared to give in exact detail how the thing should be precisely done?—Not with respect to the examination. I do not think we have a mature idea, because we feel the necessity of a district like ours taking every precaution for safety.

29392. You must remember you asked for the exemption yourself. Why did you propose it?—In respect to timbering?

29393. Yes?—I do not think we have any complaint in that direction. There is plenty of timber, and plenty of men to put it in. I do not know any complaints in that direction.

29394. (*Mr. Wm. Abraham.*) Where do the majority of your accidents take place, in the face or on the road?—On the face.

29395. Have you occasionally accidents back on your roads?—We have some accidents caused by sets of wagons running to the shaft bottom and the wagons being drawn out by the drivers.

29396. With regard to the stones falling from the roof and sides, have you any accidents of that kind on the roads?—Yes, we have a few.

29397. Would the systematic timbering of a certain distance not tend to prevent that kind of accident?—If you visited our mines you would see most of the roads are full of timber. There is scarcely room for any more timber at all. Accidents occurring back do not come as a rule as the result of a fall. It might be that a wagon ran off and nipped somebody between the wagon and the side.

29398. Is there any possibility of having improved timbering in the face by using iron logs between the last pair of timbers and the face?—I do not think so. We have some iron baulks used back over the district, but they would not be workable in the face.

29399. They would not be practicable?—No.

29400. Why?—Many of the pillars are split into small portions. You drive a few yards, and come again to cut timber out to make room for the men to get to the stone. If you had iron baulks it would be very difficult. If you put an iron baulk in, in four or five days that place would be finished, and you could not get it out again. It would be too expensive.

29401. You are a practical miner. Is it not possible to use those and place them at certain distances? It may mean a little extra cost, but they can be regained each time to prevent the falling of the roof and the crushing of the sides between the first part of the timber on the face?—It would be possible, but I do not think practicable.

29402. Why?—I cannot see how it would work. You might as well put a baulk of wood in as a baulk of iron.

29403. A thin layer of iron could be placed where you could not place a baulk of timber?—You would want the width for it.

29404. You would not want the same width for a bar of iron as for a baulk of timber?—Where a whole baulk will not do we have split baulks. We have every kind of timber necessary for keeping up the top. There is no deficiency of timber. Sometimes timber breaks down suddenly. The tops are extremely heavy.

29405. We are now dealing with the working in the face?—In the face sometimes.

29406. When we visited a colliery in Nottingham the other day, we saw that kind of thing being done. It saves accidents from a very treacherous roof?—I wish you could visit Cleveland.

29407. We are only asking, Is it practicable?—I think not.

29408. Is there any more difficulty there than to make a little hole in the solid to put the first end of the bar on?—Where it was convenient to put an iron baulk in we could put in a wood baulk.

29409. It would not require the same space to put a thin iron bar?—There is plenty of height as a rule.

29410. You put them across?—We put timber in every imaginable position. Where we feel that it is necessary to put in timber to keep the place safe, we put it in, and you could not work Cleveland mines unless you put in the necessary timber in every position to keep the place safe.

29411. It is not a question of when you agreed with the management to ask for an exemption of that rule. It is not a question of cost, but a question of impracticability?—Yes.

29412. You are certain upon that point?—It was not a question of cost. We had an interview with the employers before we made application for the exemption, and if the mines could have been worked under that rule it would have saved the employers hundreds of pounds. If we put timber in on those lines and worked the mine on those lines it would have been a great saving to the employers, because more timber is put in than is provided for by the Act. It is not a matter of economy at all.

29413. Mr. Cunynghame put it to you that putting up systematic timbering would not prevent you putting extra timber at all?—No.

29414. You are distinctly of opinion that it is not a question of cost, but a question of impracticability?—I think so.

29415. We are to sit here and believe then that there is no possible way of reducing the accidents in your mines?—There will always be accidents in those mines, so far as my experience goes. The only thing we can do is to take every precaution.

29416. You are taking that now? Is there any extra precaution possible?—We think the efficiency of the management is reduced by the introduction of incompetent men.

29417. Your desire for competent men and examinations is based upon the fact that there are a few here and there employed that are not competent?—That is quite right.

29418. With regard to the Inspectors, can you tell us how the Government inspection that is done at present is being carried out?—There are considerable intervals between the visits of the Inspectors to the various mines.

29419. When the visit is made, how much of the mine is inspected?—Just a district or so, I should think. When the Inspector comes he meets the manager at the bottom of the pit and they agree on a district; they do not go over all the pits, I know quite well.

29420. That district is taken as a sample of what the condition of the whole mine is?—Probably the next time the Inspector comes he will go in another district.

29421-3. His inspection in one district is taken as a sample of the condition of the whole mine?—The Inspector could not spend three days in a mine.

29424. The one district that he inspects at the time is taken as a sample of the condition of the whole mine?—I suppose that is the opinion the inspector arrives at.

29425. In getting another class of men as practical inspectors they would be able to make a thorough inspection of the whole mine?—That is so.

29426. That is the reason you want them?—Yes.

29427. (Mr. Ratcliffe Ellis.) You do not suggest that two deputies should always be there when timber is being set?—What we do suggest is where it is necessary for deputies to have charge of miners, that two deputies should work together. We do not say where timber is, because there are places where timber can be set by men not considered to be deputies at all. They may be considered to be labourers who set timber in certain places where miners are not working. Where miners are really working, two competent deputies should set the timber and look after them.

29428. A deputy has a good deal to do besides looking after the timber?—Yes.

29429. An examination by one deputy would do?—That is done now.

29430. You do not suggest two deputies to do any other duties?—No.

29431. Except the timber setting?—Yes.

29432. Part of your time is occupied in setting timber as a deputy?—I will give the day's work of a deputy: we commence at 5 in most places and examine for one hour, and see every place is safe before the miners commence to work. They set to work about half-past six. The deputies follow the miners in their places till 10 o'clock, and then they have time for their refreshments, and then examine those places again, which perhaps takes them half-an-hour. Then they work till about half-past one and then see the men out of the districts again. In actually setting timber it will perhaps be 6 hours.

29433. During this time when are you setting timber? We are setting timber from half-past six till 10 o'clock.

29434. After you have made your inspection?—And signed your report and sent the miners to work.

29435. Would it be practicable to have one of the deputies who had been examining another district to join a deputy who had been examining another district to go and set this timber?—You would have to have somebody in place of the one you have taken out of the district.

29436. I want to see what the deputy is going to do after setting timber. If you had a deputy and he had a competent man with him, I should think it was immaterial whether deputies or not, if competent men?—There are two deputies working together in charge of a district where there are 12 to 18 men. One goes in at 5 o'clock in the morning and examines the whole of the places the men go in. The other goes in at 6 o'clock and after the man has come in at 5, he signs the report and sends the men away. They set timber and keep the men safe during the remainder of the shift.

29437. It would not require another two men to be engaged as deputies in setting the timber after the inspection is made?—The one that comes in at 5 goes home and leaves the man who comes in at 6 to take charge of the district.

29438. That is the practice in many cases?—I believe so.

29439. You wish to make that general?—That is so.

29440. It has been suggested sometimes that a deputy leaves the men in charge of a person who is not a competent man, but is that possible under the Rules as they now stand? I see that the duties of a deputy in Rule 33 are that "He shall, at the end of each day's work, ascertain that all men and boys are out of the district under his charge: but should it be necessary for any of them to remain he shall ascertain that they are left in charge of a responsible person." Then again, with regard to the back overman, "He must ascertain that all workmen and boys under his charge, in his shift, are safely out of the mine, it being his special duty to remain until they have quitted it, but should it be necessary for any of them to remain, he shall ascertain that they are left in charge of a responsible person." There would be the same obligation on the overman?—Yes.

29441. There are three people, the overman, the back overman, during his shift, and the deputy. They are each responsible for stopping in the mine until everybody has left, or putting it in charge of responsible persons?—The deputy reports to the back overman that these men are out when he leaves the district clear and that he has charge over.

29442. What is the difficulty that Mr. Toyn mentioned?—He mentioned a case where a deputy left a district without anybody being responsible—nobody in charge.

29443. That was contrary to the rule?—It was wrong of the deputy. I suppose he was carrying out the

Mr.
W. Stephens.
7 Nov., 1907.

Mr.
W. Stephens.
7 Nov., 1907

instructions of the management. It would be wrong to leave the district without someone in charge.

29444. It does not want any alteration of the law: it only wants the law carried out?—Yes.

29445. The law is very clear?—Yes.

29446. (Mr. Smillie.) In giving reasons why you claim exemption from the timbering rules, you said that in the Cleveland mines they are sometimes a considerable distance and it does not require any timber because the roof is so good?—Yes.

29447. Would you be surprised to know that most accidents from falls take place where the roof is good?—No; I do not know that I would be surprised.

29448. I think that perhaps might be your own experience where the roof is exceptional and there is less care taken very often?—Where the roof is exceptionally bad there is more care taken.

29449. That is putting the other side of it?—But for that in some of our mines there would be a great number of accidents.

29450. Have you any considerable part of the roof in Cleveland which we as miners understand as solid rock roof which does not require timbering. It is strong enough of itself; it might be for a long distance without a prop at all?—We have some of that kind.

29451. Is there at any time what is known as slipping types coming in from which stones fall without giving much warning?—That is the top?

29452. Yes?—We have not a great number like you have in coal mines.

29453. Are you aware in many coal mines that rules for systematic timbering have been adopted where the roof is exceptionally good?—Perhaps that is so, I could not say.

29454. Systematic timbering really goes on every yard or two yards where there is no apparent reason for timbering at all. Do you think that is wrong?—No, I would not say it was wrong at all.

29455. That is one of the reasons why you claim exemption?—That was one of my reasons, but whether that was one of the reasons given at the time the exemption was claimed I could not say.

29456. I thought that was one of the reasons. Are you aware the proposals made by the Government did not make it compulsory that timbering should really take place. Are you aware that it was not laid down by law that timbering must take place if it was unnecessary it should?—If it was unnecessary?

29457. Are you aware each locality or district was to adopt its own Special Rules with regard to systematic timbering, that is Cleveland could have adopted rules for Cleveland alone, fixing the distance between the props or crowns?—Yes, but they simply asked for exemption without introducing any other system.

29458. I think Mr. Abraham put it to you, and I want to make it clear. Supposing you had systematic timbering in Cleveland, that would not by any means bind you to only put up props where it was laid down by the rules. You would be expected in addition to that to put up all necessary timber, and six or three times as much timber as laid down by the rule?—In cases where it was not necessary we should be supposed to carry out the Act.

29459. To carry out your own Special Rules if you adopted them?—Yes, I see.

29460. I do not think you agree altogether with Mr. Toyn on the question of unskilled workmen being employed as fillers. I take it that where men are filling ironstone after it is blown down there is a danger there too of falls?—Of course there is a danger, but they are protected by the examination by the parties responsible for their safety.

29461. The chargeman, when one or two, or 10 shots, it may be, have been fired, has to make an examination to find out whether, as the result of the shots, the place is safe before the fillers go in?—Yes.

29462. Does he remain in that place afterwards?—No.

29463. He has to ascertain at the present time at least that the place is safe?—Yes.

29464. Or if it is not safe, it is his duty to see that it is made safe?—He gets the deputy to make it safe.

29465. How long might he be away before other shots are necessary—a period of some hours, I suppose?—It would take some time. There may be a good deal, and it would be part of a shift to clear that stone out of the place

29466. While it might be perfectly safe when the chargeman examined it and left it, it might not be safe three hours afterwards?—That is so. He could not avoid what happened if the place was safe when he admitted the fillers. He would have done his duty.

29467. You mentioned the creep coming on?—Yes.

29468. In taking out pillars the creep will be continuously on?—Yes.

29469. The moment you take out pillars there is always a creep on?—I want to make plain that the chargeman is not absolutely in charge of that place. There are deputies in charge of that district at the same time, who are round the district to see the places are safe.

29470. I am really wanting to find out now whether it is more dangerous for unskilled persons who have never been down a mine as fillers, because Mr. Toyn said he had really no objection to unskilled persons coming down from the surface who had not been down before and acting as fillers. I want to find out whether there is any real danger from the roof?—There is a certain amount of danger from their occupation, but when the machineman examines the place and the filler goes in the deputies are commonly in the place. It would not be unusual to go in two or three times during the shift.

29471. They are expected to do that?—They are expected to make a second examination.

29472. As a matter of fact, in your district the deputies do all the necessary timbering, unless occasion arises to put up a prop when the deputy is not there?—Yes.

29473. The man at the working face is not expected to do the ordinary timbering at your work?—No.

29474. The deputy is supposed to do that?—Yes.

29475. Would it be as safe for an unskilled person, who had no practical experience as a miner, even to fill at the face as it would be for a skilled person who knew the nature of the roof?—I do not suppose it would; but still the place is thoroughly examined by the parties in charge of those men when commencing to work. If the men have to work at all they must be exposed to a certain amount of danger.

29476. Any person unskilled or skilled?—If we said that was not safe it would mean the exclusion of all who were not skilled persons in the mine. Taking our experience with reference to accidents, the fillers we think have got on fairly well for that matter. They have not had a big number of accidents.

29477. What is meant by a creep? It is understood thoroughly by miners and deputies and all experienced people that where there is a creep on the roof, the roof might be safe at this moment, and an hour afterwards be very dangerous and require timbering?—That is so.

29478. Would it not be more safe in a case of that kind that practical men with experience should be in that working place than unskilled persons without experience?—There is no doubt of that. You could not work it in that way. If you had to have all experienced men in the mine there would be no room for the inexperienced men at all.

29479. At least you could have one experienced man in each place?—Yes.

29480. As a general rule, you have at least one experienced man in each place filling?—Not fillers, you put fillers in to fill stone. They might be men who have no real experience in the mine, who have been in a week or two.

29481. Is that a breach of any general rule?—We think not, as far as the filling is concerned.

29482. Is it not at the working face?—No, filling the stone down at the face.

29483. They are engaged there as ironstone getters?—They do not get any stone at all, they fill it after it is got.

29484. It is at the working face?—As near the face as they can get to fill.

29485. As a matter of fact, it is absolutely close to the working face. It is blown out and lying at the working face?—Yes.

29486. They are employed at the working face. Do you allow one or two or three or four unskilled persons to fill ironstone at the working place?—Yes.

29487. You allow that without a skilled person in charge?—Yes, the fillers follow in and fill the stone in the places.

29488. Is that understood to be carrying out the rule with regard to unskilled persons—Rule 39?—Yes. I think so.

29489. Is that the general feeling among the mine managers and deputies of your county?—There has not been any complaint raised on that point at all.

29490. Have you had any experience in a coal mine?—Not as a worker.

29491. You know a coal mine?—Yes.

29492. And the Coal Mines Regulation Act?—Yes.

29493. Would you say that where coal has been cut by machinery underground, and falls to the floor, that persons filling that coal would not be coal-getters?—I should not say that they were coal-getters if somebody got it for them.

29494. Would you say two or three unskilled persons might be employed filling coal which was cut by a coal-cutting machine at the face without a breach of the Special Rule?—Is that not done now?

29495. No, it is not allowed at the present time, but evidently in Cleveland it is allowed?—That is so.

29496. I was particularly anxious to know that?—Yes, that is so.

29497. I did not take it from Mr. Toyn's evidence that that was so, but you are perfectly clear upon that?—Yes, they are not considered to be in any way qualified to take charge or anything of that kind, but they are considered to be capable of looking after themselves and filling the stone after it has fallen.

29498. As a deputy, you gave very frankly your opinion about General Rule 38, as to the examination by the workmen. It is your opinion it does some good in keeping the management up to the mark?—Yes.

29499. While you could not give any cases in which workmen had been unfairly treated for giving adverse reports, you, as a workman yourself and a deputy, say that there is always the fear that there might be?—That is the natural feeling amongst the workmen.

29500. Whether there is any cause is not for you to say?—No, that is so.

29501. You do know that the feeling always exists that they may be injured in their employment?—Yes.

29502. Consequently you, as an official of the mine, say that it would be an improvement if there were Government inspectors who were clear altogether from any influence of that kind?—I think so.

29503. Even where the mines are well managed, and everything is done for the safety of the workmen, it would still be well to have inspectors making a periodical examination?—Yes, I would not suggest doing away with local inspectors.

29504. Still leaving it in their power to do it?—Yes.

29505. I suppose the ordinary examinations by the Inspector of Mines are usually made when an accident takes place?—There are occasionally visits where there are no accidents.

29506. Surprise visits?—I do not know about that. I have not heard of inspectors coming, but I notice that they turn up on certain days.

29507. When a fatal accident takes place there is invariably an examination?—Yes.

29508. Do the inspectors in making an examination after a fatal accident, examine usually only the place where the accident has taken place?—I think that is all. They visit the mine for that purpose.

29509. They do not on that occasion make a general examination of the mine?—Not as far as I know; I think they do not.

29510. They would make a general examination of the mine, or any part of the mine, if their attention was called to anything being wrong there?—Yes, the inspector asks us to notify him if there is anything, in a quiet way.

29511. Do you consider it is a physical impossibility for the present number of mine's inspectors in your district in South Durham to thoroughly examine the mines?—Absolutely impossible.

29512. And that while mines inspection, as it at present exists, has done a great deal of good it would do more good if there were sufficient to make a thorough examination of the mine?—That is so. As Mr. Toyn pointed out, it takes three days to go over some, and it is a physical impossibility to do that.

29513. If they work all their time it is an impossibility?—Yes; we have no fault to find with them.

29514. You do not complain of the inspectors, but you say that they could not do the work you would like to see them do?—Yes.

29515. (*Mr. Ratcliffe Ellis.*) With reference to Rule 39, how is the ironstone got down—by machinery?—By machinery.

29516. Then the men who go in are fillers?—Not always: in a good many cases there are some hundreds of men working back with a rotary drill, which is a small drill they get the stone down with between them, and they fill between them. They are what we term "miners."

29517. Have those men had the two years' experience at the face?—Yes, many of them have been working a lifetime in the place.

29518. Rule 39 is "No person not now employed as a coal or ironstone getter." You consider the persons who are going to fill are fillers and not getters?—Yes. I may say that in a case where a stranger wants to get in the place as a miner, he works in the place as a practical miner.

29519. This only applies to fillers and not to miners?—Yes.

29520. (*Mr. Smillie.*) Are the men who work boring machines getters?—Rotary machines?

29521. Yes.—Yes.

29522. Is the man who stems the hole and charges it a getter?—The two work together on the general mining principle, but where the machines are electric or compressed air machines those men blow the stone down and leave it for somebody to fill: but two working together get their own stone and fill it.

29523. They bore their own holes, charge their own holes and fire their own shots, and that may bring down some stones. They are ironstone getters during the time they are doing that, and they are not ironstone getters during the time they fill?—The Cleveland miners get their own stone and fill. They work one place the whole of the time. They drill a single hole and fire it and fill it up.

29524. An ordinary miner getting his own stuff, filling and sending it out?—Yes.

29525. Under this new system, one man prepares the hole, another man fires the shot, and then the fillers come in and fill?—That is so.

29526. The reason for this rule was because it was considered dangerous for unskilled persons to work at the face?—Yes.

29527. Do you know why it was dangerous?—Was it from falls at the face?—With regard to the blasting, and that kind of thing.

29528. Supposing there is no blasting, are persons prevented from working at the face if they have not had three years' experience?—According to that, you say our fillers are not working under the Act, really.

29529. My point is, is there not a danger which was anticipated by this Act here when men are filling stones which have previously been gotten at the face?—If they have to work underground at all they could not work under more favourable conditions, because their working places are, as a rule, thoroughly examined and looked after.

29530. There is supervision to look after their safety?—Yes.

29531. They may be six hours at the face filling this material without a person being in charge there?—I would not like to define whether they were working under the Act or not.

29532. (*Chairman.*) They might be six hours alone without anybody looking after them?—The deputies are in charge of those men. He goes in at various times during the shift to see that they are all right. He does not continue with them.

29533. (*Mr. Smillie.*) I want to be clear. The charge-man after shots are fired makes a thorough examination of the place in order to make sure whether the roof is safe and other things. Then the fillers who may be unskilled persons go in to fill, but it may be three hours before the deputy comes round to make his examination. He may come in 10 minutes, or half-an-hour, but it may be three hours. If the witness is correct in this, we have sometimes coal-cutting machines which cut 70 or 80 or 90 yards of coal face, and the material falls down on to the bottom. Then you would be correct in saying 60 or 70 unskilled persons may go in and fill this coal and they are not coal-getters. That is not the Act of Parliament.

Mr.
W. Stephens
7 Nov., 1907.

Mr.
W. Stephens.
7 Nov., 1907.

(Mr. Ratcliffe Ellis.) He has given evidence fairly. The witness says, in his opinion if a man has to work underground he could not work under more favourable conditions than these people work.

(The Witness.) They are looked after by the parties in the mine appointed for that purpose.

29534. (Chairman.) Do you know about coal mines ?—No.

29535. (Mr. Smillie.) The same clause applies to both. It says coal or iron-stone getters ?—Those are not iron-stone getters.

29536. A coal miner who fills the coal at the face after it is blown down is a coal getter ?—If he does nothing but fill ?

29537. Yes.

(Mr. Ratcliffe Ellis.) I do not think so. You may suggest that this clause should be extended to cover these men, but at present it only extends to the man who gets the coal. It is not the drawer.

(Mr. Smillie.) The drawer is not a getter.

(Mr. Ratcliffe Ellis.) Neither is the filler a getter ; that is the point.

(Witness.) He is not a getter at all ; he does not get any stone.

29538. (Chairman.) If you have nothing more to say we will now have Mr. Braithwaite ?—No.

Mr. JAMES BRAITHWAITE, called and examined.

Mr. J.
Braithwaite.

29539. (Chairman.) I understand you are a working miner ?—Yes.

29540. How long have you been working underground ?—40 years.

29541. Iron-stone only ?—Yes.

29542. Do you agree with what you have heard said here to-day about the qualifications of the deputy, that he should have at least three years' experience in getting iron-stone, and pass an examination ?—Yes, I do.

29543. You have worked under a good many deputies yourself ?—Yes, and I have been a deputy myself for a good many years.

29544. Why did you not remain as a deputy ? Is it too hard work ?—No, the last time I was deputy, I was deputy at a place we are now making complaint about, and which we wish to have altered. It is where one deputy takes charge of a big district and has four or six men under him, and this is the method that I understand we have come up here to try and get remedied. We do not agree with that method.

29545. You gave up being a deputy because you were asked to take charge of too big a district ?—I had charge of it for four years, and I felt that the responsibility was too great, and that I would rather work in the stone as a miner than bear the responsibility.

29546. You thought too great responsibility was put on you, and a responsibility you did not care to face ?—Yes. I was in a district where there was a tremendous lot of timbering to be done ; sometimes I had four, sometimes six under me, and I have had eight. I have had to send men away in the morning to put timber in, and I have not been in a position to examine it for the day, and I did not care to have the responsibility on my shoulders.

29547. You had such a big district that you could not get round in the course of the shift to see what was going on ?—No.

29548. The consequence was that sometimes working faces would be left unexamined by you during the whole shift ?—Yes, till the next morning.

29549. Therefore, you complain not only that in some cases the deputies are not properly qualified, but that there are too few deputies to perform the duties ?—There were more day-men than deputies. I was the only recognised deputy in the district ; the other men were classed as day-men.

29550. They were not sufficiently qualified to do deputy's work ?—I should not like to say about qualifications. They had to put the timber in ; although they put the timber in, I had to bear the responsibility of it being put in.

29551. You often could not be there to see it put in ?—I could not be there.

29552. You come here to make quite a different complaint to what we have heard already. Your principal complaint is that there are not enough deputies to do the work, and that the districts of the deputies are too large ?—Too big for one deputy to have the responsibility of.

29553. There ought to be more deputies appointed, you think ?—I contend that there ought to be two men appointed to work practically as mates and have a district they can manage.

29554. Supposing you had a mate, would you consider your district would be too large for the two of you ?—Yes, that district would.

29555. That district was too large for two ?—Yes.

29556. Do you think that still goes on ; did anybody succeed you in that district ?—Yes.

29557. Is he still continuing to do that district by himself ?—I could not say ; it is some years ago, and I have not worked at the same mine since.

29558. Would you like to give the name of the mine, or would you rather not ?—I do not know that I have any occasion for not doing so. I am speaking the truth. I will tell you—it is Stanghow.

29559. Would you like that put in the evidence or not ?—Just as you like. It is the truth, and I am not ashamed of it.

29560. You do not know whether that state of things still continue ?—I could not say, I have not been there since I left.

29561. With regard to the qualifications of a deputy, do you consider as a rule that the management choose the best men to act as deputies they can get ?—Yes, I believe that they do.

29562. On the whole, the deputies are equal to discharging their duties. They are equal as regards qualifications, but they have too big districts to attend to ?—Yes.

29563. Do you consider it necessary that a deputy should pass an examination ?—A practical examination.

29564. Not necessarily a written examination ?—If a man passes an examination for his certificate it would be no worse for him if he is a young man. I think they ought to be examined as regards the practical part of the work, because the roofs vary very much. In some places they may seem very solid and sound for a considerable time, but through shots being fired and cuttings into the top, it lets air in, and, as is commonly known among miners, the place blows, and it is on the floor in a very few minutes. It may be sound in the morning and two hours after that place may be stopped for want of timber, or on the floor.

29565. (Dr. Haldane.) What do you mean by "the place blows" ?—The working of the place, by the explosion of the powder it cuts into the top, and the air gets into this up the fissures, and there is so much gas and shale at the top that the gas and air work together, and the place blows.

29566. You feel it ?—Yes, it causes the place to crack along.

29567. (Chairman.) Have you anything to complain of with regard to the examination of places the miners work in before they begin their shift ? Do you think unpractical men and men of insufficient experience are ever told off for that duty ?—No, I have never known unpractical men sent to make an examination. At the time I was speaking of, I had to go in at half-past four in the morning, an hour and a half before the miners, to make my examination.

29568. In general I may take it you agree with the evidence as regards the appointment of deputies which has been given by Mr. Toyn and Mr. Stephens, but you add a complaint of your own, namely, that the deputies' districts are far too large ?—Yes.

29569. At least, they are in a particular mine?—Yes.
29570. This particular mine you worked in?—Yes.
29571. Are they too large in the mine you work in now?—I am thankful to say in my mine two practical men work together, and they have a district between them.
29572. It is not too large?—No.
29573. You have nothing to complain of where you are working now?—No.
29574. With regard to these power machine miners, do you agree with the evidence given, that the safety of the mines suffers from young and inexperienced men being sometimes made chargemen?—I know it would not be right to put a young inexperienced man as a shot-firer, because it is a very responsible position.
29575. Or in charge of a machine?—The driller is not so responsible as the shot-firer. He has no explosive, and very often the shot-firer has the place to chalk where he has to drill the holes. He has not so much responsibility as the shot-firer.
29576. With regard to the man in charge of a machine, it might not be necessary to insist that he should have three years' experience in getting stone. That might not be necessary in his case?—For the driller or shot-firer?
29577. The driller?—He wants experience to know how to lay his holes on. No man can do the work without practical experience.
29578. He would not get much experience of drilling by stone getting. He might or might not?—He wants experience to know how to lay his holes on.
29579. In some cases it would not be necessary to work with a drill at all in getting the ironstone?—No, I do not know. Well, in some pits there are what they call the "pick-work" districts.
29580. Getting stone where no drilling was necessary would not make a man competent, if he worked ten years, to take charge of a machine. A man could probably in less than three years learn how to take charge of a machine?—Yes, he could in less than three years.
29581. He must have fair experience. Do you think inexperienced persons are often put in charge of a machine and shot-firing?—I could not say about that.
29582. Are they experienced or not experienced, do you think, to be in charge of a machine and shot-firing?—They must be experienced.
29583. Are they, as a matter of fact, experienced?—They must be experienced.
29584. You have no complaint to make as to what occurs in your mine?—They must be experienced men.
29585. You have no complaint as to what occurs?—We have no power machines in our mine: it is all hand drillers, hand miners.
29586. With regard to shot-firers, do you think that shot-firers are generally men of sufficient experience to perform their duties properly?—I could not say. I know that a shot-firer's is a very responsible post for anyone to fill.
29587. You do not complain as to inexperienced persons being put to fire shots in your mine?—I could not, because I never knew of an inexperienced person being set to be a shot-firer.
29588. With regard to the inspection of mines, do you agree that it is necessary or desirable, at all events, to have more inspection in your mines?—I think it would be beneficial if we had more inspections.
29589. Do you agree that the best way to get that inspection would be to appoint a working man as an additional inspector?—I think it would be very beneficial.
29590. Better than having another inspector of the present class?—Yes, I think it would. With regard to working men inspections, they are continually carried out at the pit I am at, and I have been appointed by the men on several occasions to make the examination.
29591. I am glad to have somebody who has done that sort of work. Do you feel you are in the least hampered by what you say?—Not at all. When we have finished the examination we go into the office and the report-book is placed before us, and to the best of my judgment I write a fair honest report. Some part of the mine I had to make complaint about and ask for things to be remedied, and I may say they were done within a very short time.
29592. You find the management have not the least objection to your finding fault where fault ought to be found?—No, I do not think they do.
29593. Wherever you have had to make a bad report on a mine, what you have reported has been remedied at once?—Yes.
29594. Do you know anybody who has suffered through making true reports of his mine?—No, I do not: I have never heard at all of anyone suffering through it.
29595. (*Mr. Wm. Abraham.*) Have you been appointed by the district to come here or by the mine that you work in?—I have been appointed by the district, by our own Association.
29596. You are able to speak for the district as well as for the mine?—Yes.
29597. What is the size of the district that you had charge of when you were a deputy?—I had two big power machines to follow, and 26 or 28 fillers.
29598. What would be the size of the district?—About 28 places, 14 places to each machine.
29599. What examination had you to do in the morning?—I had to thoroughly examine every place and make a report of it.
29600. Who examined the road leading thereto?—I had to.
29601. What distance had you to travel?—I am sure I could not say, but a long distance: I should say two or three miles.
29602. To start with, you began at half-past four in the morning?—That is going round the district from one place to the other and examining the wagon-ways and air-courses.
29603. That is what we wanted to know. You started your work going down at half-past four in the morning?—Yes.
29604. You had a distance of two or three miles to travel before you came to the working ways?—Not before I came into my district. My district was close to the pit-bottom.
29605. What was the distance of road you had to examine leading to the working place? That was my question before?—I could not exactly say the distance.
29606. Was it a mile?—I should say it would be to go round by the bank which the stuff came from, from the landings, to go round to the working face, it would be a mile—rather more.
29607. Rather over than under?—Yes.
29608. When you got to your district the roads and faces you had to examine there added to that would be between two and three miles which you would have to walk?—I could not say accurately, but I should suppose they would be.
29609. We do not expect you to have measured it to a yard. You had to examine all these places before the men went on?—Yes.
29610. You had also to follow these two machines. Who examined the place after the shots were put in?—The shot fireman.
29611. You did not examine them?—No.
29612. Who examined the timber?—It was my work to examine the timber.
29613. Who put it up?—The men working under me.
29614. You told us that the district was too large to enable you to do your work properly as you thought it ought to be done?—Yes, it was.
29615. Is that a complaint in other places in the district now, that the districts allotted to the deputies are rather larger than they can do?—I believe there are complaints to that effect.
29616. In your opinion it would be well and necessary that more men should be appointed than that the districts should be made smaller?—Yes.
29617. That is from the point of view of safety to the men and the mine as well?—Yes.
29618. That is your opinion, having had 40 years' experience?—Yes, that is my opinion.
29619. With regard to the examination made by workmen, do you agree with the last witness that what is necessary is that a more minute examination of all the places is necessary than what the Government Inspectors are able to make?—Yes, I do.

Mr. J. Braithwaite.
7 Nov., 1907

Mr. J.
Braithwaite.
7 Nov., 1907.

29620. Do you think working men like yourself, having passed a practical examination, would be the proper men to do that?—Yes, I think they would.

29621. (*Mr. Ratcliffe Ellis.*) Could you define in any way what the size of these districts ought to be? Is there any rule?—No, there is not; it depends chiefly upon the nature of the ground in which you work. Some districts might have very rotten tops. Two deputies might be kept busy, and have more work than they can get through to follow 12 or 14 men. In other districts where the tops are more solid, and there is not so much timbering required, two deputies might follow 20 or 22 men far easier than the other two would follow 12 or 14 men.

29622. You would have to leave it to the management to decide the size of these districts?—Yes.

29623. But there should be some sort of rule that districts should not be larger than they can be conveniently worked by one or two men?—Two deputies.

29624. Whatever be the general rule, the manager would have to decide as to the size of these districts?—Yes.

29625. With reference to the examination you make under General Rule 38, if you make a thorough examination, we hear it takes three days?—Three days we were examining.

29626. You have yourself to continue working in this mine and undertake any risk that there might be in the mine?—Yes.

29627. So that you would naturally take great care that your examination was a fit one, because any defects there might be you would suffer from if any mischief came from them?—Yes.

X / 29628. In your view are the persons who can most satisfactorily make examinations, the persons who are working in the mine?—Yes.

29629. You think so?—Yes.

29630. (*Mr. Smillie.*) On that point, have you been very many years in the mine you are in at present?—More or less I have worked in it close on 20 years.

29631. Because of having worked there a considerable time you will be well acquainted with the mine?—I am.

29632. And practically all the workings of it?—All the districts. Every district there is in the mine I am fully acquainted with.

29633. Under the Coal Mines Regulation Act are you aware a person is not entitled to leave his own working place? He is supposed to remain in his own working place from the time he comes in in the morning till the time he goes out at night?—Yes.

29634. A person might be in a mine some years without knowing much more about the mine except the district he is employed in?—That is true.

29635. Under circumstances of that kind you might be quite as well qualified to make an examination under this Act in a neighbouring mine as you would in a mine at which you were employed?—Yes.

29636. That is, if you did not know any more about your mine than your own working place?—Yes.

29637. What is really required is the practical knowledge?—Yes.

29638. In order to make a thorough examination on behalf of the workmen?—Yes.

29639. To some extent the danger of intimidation is removed where two men might be appointed from one mine to examine another mine, not the one they are working in. To some extent there would be less danger of intimidation?—Yes.

X / 29640. I am not saying that there is any intimidation?—I have not seen any so far as I am concerned.

29641. There would be more freedom to give an opinion of the mine you are really employed in yourself?—I would rather, if I was chosen, make an examination of my own mine than a neighbour's mine, because I think the men at the neighbour's pit might say "We think we have someone in our pit able to make the examination quite well."

29642. I mean if you were appointed by the men at the neighbouring pit to make this examination?—If I was appointed to do it, I would willingly do it.

29643. The men in your pit could not appoint you?—No.

29644. If you were appointed by men in a neighbouring pit, it would be of course, because they believed you to be best fitted for the examination. There are many ways of making a miner feel he has done wrong in addition to dismissing him?—Yes.

29645. A manager can make it hot for a man without dismissing him?—Yes.

29646. Sometimes examiners might feel themselves that they were not being altogether fairly treated, although they could not prove it?—I cannot say that in my own case. It could be done. A manager or an overman, if he had anything against a miner in the place, could, as you say, make it very warm for him.

29647. Without being able to prove that he was being unfairly treated?—Yes.

29648. I do not suggest that is done to any extent, because clearly it is not in your own county. No such thing is done; but I only wanted to bring out the point made by Mr. Ellis that what is really required in an examination of this kind is the practical knowledge and intelligence necessary to give an honest report of what you find?—Yes.

29649. You believe those examinations have done, and would still do, a considerable amount of good from the point of view of proper ventilation and safety?—I am certain they have done good.

29650. You have no desire to give up the right to do this, although you claim an extension of the Government inspection?—No; I think we ought to have the right to do so.

29651. You want to have them side by side?—Especially when a fatal accident takes place, I contend that we should have the right to send two examiners to examine the place where the fatality occurred, so that we are in a position to give evidence if required at the Coroner's Inquest.

29652. That is in addition to the examination under this rule?—Yes.

29653. Where a fatal accident takes place, or a serious non-fatal accident, it is not a bad thing for the examiners who examine to find out whether there is any blame attaching to the officials?—Yes.

29654. You do take advantage of that sometimes?—Yes.

29655. You are examiners?—Yes.

29656. (*Chairman.*) Supposing anything should occur short of an accident that would make you like to make another examination, although the month had not elapsed since the last examination, would the management make any objection to your going down more than once a month if you gave good reasons for asking for another examination?—I do not think they would. I think there is an agreement between the mine-owners and our association that when a fatality occurs they are wishful that two men should be appointed.

29657. Supposing anything had happened, a great fall of roof, which had not hurt anybody, when all the miners were away, would the management object to your going down more than once a month?—I do not know; I have never known that. I do not think they would have any objection.