

1341. And comes away readily?—Yes.

1342. Now, when this coming-down takes place that you have told us of, does it come down pretty vertically?—Yes.

1343. Slowly?—It might not give you two minutes.

1344. Have you ever noticed if there is any lateral movement down to the dip as it comes down? Do the timbers ever show any upsetting?—The bottom of the timber moves down the hill—that is, the foot of the props takes a downward motion.

1345. Now, when the floor rises and the fireclay rises, where does it spew?—It generally breaks up from both sides of the coal.

1346. Does it come up equally on both sides?—Yes; it will rise completely to the roof very often. That is a great difficulty, and causes a crushing of the coal. They are not capable of filling until the props break away from the coal.

1347. *Mr. Moody.*] Until you take the pillars out it continues to come down; then it will relieve the crushing of the coal a good deal?—Yes. The great difficulty is that the bottom lifts so much that way that we cannot draw the timber very often. The timber has oftentimes not been drawn, as the bottom lifts until it holds the roof up. The pillars should have been taken out sooner immediately to the goaf, and while the roads were still in good repair. The consequence of the present style of working has been that all the inclines have had to be redriven and relaid, and the coal was unnecessarily crushed.

1348. How is the redriving of the inclines paid for—by day-wage?—No; it is paid at so much a yard. The bords have to be crossed again. It might cost from £10 to £20 to cross the bord. In some instances they have driven in the coal, and, splitting the pillars, have then redriven back through the bord.

1349. Splitting the pillars instead of taking them out?—Yes.

1350. *The Chairman.*] The question we were at was the inspection of mines and the visits of the Inspector?—Yes; that is one of the points the Inspector should see to more frequently than he does at present. We think the Inspector should examine the mine once a week. There is another thing that is causing a good deal of comment amongst the men, and that is the incapability or the inexperience of the present Inspector of the mines as to coal-mining. He is not a practical coal-miner. He may be a very good man, no doubt. Personally, I have every respect for the gentleman, and I believe the men have every respect for him; but, as to his knowledge of coal-mining, the man has never had any experience.

1351. Is he not certificated?—I cannot say whether he is or not. All we know is that the man is not an experienced coal-miner.

1352. Do the men expect that an Inspector of coal-mines should be certificated?—We do hold that he should have at least as much experience in working as a mine-manager, and I consider he should have superior qualifications. We object to the present gentleman on account of his non-experience. We hold that in mines as dangerous as the Coal-pit Heath and the Brunner a thoroughly practical man is required to go in and examine these mines. Taking into consideration the height of that seam, and the way in which it is broken about, I consider there should be a thoroughly practical man as a mine-inspector. I do not know whether any witness has mentioned it before to you that even at the present time, when the mine is not being worked, she is shifting to the surface.

1353. The whole of the workings are on the move?—Yes; because a man told me the other day that she made a bump that shifted the crockery on the shelves.

1354. Have you felt it at all?—Yes, I felt it before, near the working of the pillars.

1355. Since then has it got worse?—Yes.

1356. Is that in any particular part of the workings, or all over?—Where they are working the pillars at the present time, I consider, myself, that it will require great care and caution, because there are no pillars left in the mine to support the mine. I believe there is nothing else but pillar-workings going on.

1357. Is that in Coal-pit Heath?—Yes, in the Coal-pit Heath and the Brunner. It appears that the water has risen up to where they have taken the pillars out. A part of the coal will be lost, because, if the pillars break away, with the amount of water there is coming down, they will not be able to get the pumping-gear through to get it out.

1358. *Mr. Moody.*] Are you aware that when the mine is filled up with water in that way the water keeps the roof up, and when it is taken out the roof collapses?—Yes, I know, but I say there must be something to sustain the roof; but in this instance I refer to workings that are further back than where they are working now. I think, with regard to that, that this Commission should have power to send some one in to look at these pillars. The pillars have been broken to that extent that there is nothing left to support the roof. I am afraid there will be some accident similar to that at Newcastle lately. These pillars have been robbed by the present management, and under the previous management it was just getting the coal anywhere they could. You know what "robbing" a pillar means?

1359. You say, then, formerly the pillars were robbed?—Yes. You could not get down now to see these pillars for water. Of course the pillars under water are let off a little.

1360. Where the pillars have been taken out has the roof settled?—Yes; and where the pillars were left they were so small that there is not support to the roof.

1361. There are pillars which are not sufficient to bear the roof?—Yes.

1362. Do you think a portion of this water is surface-water?—Yes.

1363. Have you any idea of what portion of the whole is left—that is, what is get-at-able at present in the Coal-pit Heath Mine in pillars?—There is a lot of coal left that you could get at, but I could give you no information on that point unless I had the plan here.

1364. I want to know what available coal there is to get at?—The number they could employ