

1415. Can you tell us whether that was reverting to the old price which was broken down by the Newcastle competition?—No; it had never been at that price before. That was given to me by Mr. James Brindley.

1416. Was the position changed in any way in consequence of the rise in price?—Besides this rise in price they asked the miners to submit to a reduction of 6d. per ton in the Brunner Mine. This was declined, and the old arrangement was carried on until March, 1890, and according to Mr. Kennedy's statement I believe it was at a profit. And, to be plain, there was a profit at the arrangement of 4s. per ton before the reduction, as Mr. Kennedy admitted. He did not get the reduction he asked for in May, 1889, and still there was a fair profit up to March, 1890. Then the miners, seeing that the coal in the pillars was crushed to such an extent, and that, in filling 12cwt. of coal, they only got from 2cwt. to 7cwt. of screened—that is only approximate, I would not say exactly as to the amount—they asked to be paid on the gross weight of screened coal, 2s. 6d. for the Brunner, and 2s. 10d. for Coal-pit Heath and Wallsend. This was acceded to, and there was no other alteration made until Mr. Kennedy demanded the 20-per-cent. reduction up to the end of June, after which the men were locked out. As to the royalty, I considered that, these faults requiring to be proved, and the mines not paying, the men were being reduced down to a price at which they could not possibly work. The one thing necessary to foster the industry and to prove these faults is for the Government to make some concession on the royalty. Of course, I am not aware of the position the company is in, but, so far as the position of the men is concerned, they cannot afford to forego the wages.

1417. How far would the storage obviate that?—That would obviate the mere bar difficulty, but the principal thing that I can see is the question of relief, to enable the company to get through these faults.

1418. Do you think that would set them free to prove the faults if they were released from the royalty payment? If it would take the amount stated by you to prove these faults, the reduction would not relieve them?—If they were sending down a certain amount of coal every day—say, £3,000, with 6d. off for haulage, that would keep some of the men going in these inner drives.

1419. *Mr. Moody.*] Then, the object you are aiming at would be a temporary measure, to enable them to overcome these faults?—That is to say, the Government have leased a property which has proved from experience to have great difficulties or defects, owing to these faults, and in their position as landlord they should contribute something towards overcoming the difficulties.

1420. Is it not usual in coal-mining for the management to keep a good stock of whole coal in front of them, instead of, when they come to a fault, starting to take all the pillars out behind?—That is a question of management. I have not seen it in the colonies. It is usual in the colonies to take the pillars.

WEDNESDAY, 22ND OCTOBER, 1890.

Mr. WILLIAM WHITECROSS CLEMENTSON sworn and examined.

1421. *The Chairman.*] What are you, Mr. Clementson?—I am a coal-miner.

1422. How long have you been at Brunnerton?—Five years.

1423. Where were you previously?—I was in England, and from there I went to Tasmania.

1424. You are check-weighman for the miners at Brunnerton, I believe?—Yes. I have been check-weighman for the last fifteen months at the Brunner Mine, and for nine months previously at the Coal-pit Heath. I changed to the Brunner when the working of the Coal-pit Heath was amalgamated with it.

1425. What are your duties?—Our duties are, in the morning, to see all tokens out, and what men are at work; so far as possible, to see what coal is taken out each day, and keep an account of it.

1426. When you say "our duties," who weighs with you?—The company's weighman.

1427. Do you work together as if you were mates at the work?—Yes.

1428. You weigh together and you check together?—Yes. We say, "We will begin weighing now," and then we might weigh one or two.

1429. *Mr. Brown.*] You do not weigh every truck?—No; we only weigh one for each man.

1430. In the day?—Yes.

1431. You average a day's work by that one skip?—Yes.

1432. What is the average amount in the skips?—It will range from 9cwt. to 12cwt. in the Coal-pit Heath—sometimes we get one a little over—and in the Brunner from 9½cwt. to 15cwt.

1433. Have you anything to do with reckoning the quantity of slack after the coal is screened?—No.

1434. You have no means of forming any opinion?—No; it is not our duty at all.

1435. What was the maximum and minimum made by any man during the nine months you were at Coal-pit Heath, before the combination of the two mines, under the old system? How many skips did the men turn out?—Different quantities. Sometimes a man would be able to do twenty or twenty-two in one day, and another day not more than ten or twelve by the same man.

1436. Do you know the cause of the difference?—With the full twenty or twenty-two it would be a back-end shaft, and with the smaller quantity it would be what is called a sumper-shaft, or header.

1437. Is there much difference in the coal put out by the different men? Are some men better than others?—Yes; but it depends a good deal upon the places.

1438. I suppose some men could make more than others, no matter what places they were in?—Yes, that is only natural.

1439. The day that a man was putting out twenty or twenty-two skips, would any men be making more than that?—Yes.