

1599. Do you frequently see Mr. Bishop in the mine going about?—Some weeks.

1600. Do you see him every week?—Not every week.

1601. Have you formed any opinion as to how often the Government Inspector should visit the mine?—In this pillar-working, I believe it would be better if they were oftener inspected or visited.

1602. Have you any idea how often he visits them now?—No. I can frame no correct idea, but I think once in two months is little enough for Government inspection.

1603. Do you think any practical mischief has yet arisen through inspection being infrequent?—I think so. I cannot, however, deal with this question, from the simple fact that I have not been working in the neglected part.

1604. Where do you think there has been neglect?—In the Coal-pit Heath.

1605. *Mr. Brown.*] What is it you refer to?—I mean the taking the outer edges out first, instead of going in and taking out the back pillars first, which has caused the rock to break.

1606. *The Chairman.*] You mean robbing the pillars?—Commencing to thin the pillars at the outer edges of the coal-seam instead of going in to the seam and working back. I believe, although I have not seen it myself, that if the Inspector had been there more frequently he would not have allowed the pillars to have been taken out in the Coal-pit Heath, and thus let the water into the Coal-pit Heath Mine.

1607. Have you ever experienced any heavy shocks in the mine, or loud noises, or seen any movement?—That is frequent in all the mines where pillars are taken out or worked.

1608. This has been nothing out of the common, then?—I have heard of such things, but I have never seen them myself.

1609. *Mr. Brown.*] You worked in Durham, I think you said. What was the number of hours they worked there per day?—I think it was six when I was there.

1610. *Mr. Moody.*] That did not apply to the datal men?—No, they worked ten.

1611. *Mr. Brown.*] When was the reduction made to the six hours? Was it six hours in your time?—Yes.

1612. Was that considered a full day's work in the mine, or because of the number of men there was to do the work?—It was a regularly accepted thing that the day's work should be six hours.

1613. Was it compulsory on the part of the union to compel the men to work only six hours? Did any of them work more than that?—I can remember longer.

1614. But at the time you were there?—It was six hours a day.

1615. If it was contract work, why could you not work eight hours if you had wanted to do so?—There were only two six-hour shifts in the day.

1616. That was during all your term there?—Yes.

1617. That was before you arrived here, of course?—Yes.

1618. Can you specify the years?—About 1868, I think.

1619. Six hours seems a short time?—It is plenty long enough in a coal-mine. You do not need to make them eight hours.

1620. You do not need to work these six hours, I suppose, if you are paid by the ton?—Yes.

1621. You can come out if you like?—I do not think so; not very well.

1622. Does this Durham six hours commence at the mine-mouth or at the face? Who fixes the time—is it the employer?—We start when the whistle goes in the morning, and the engine-man calls us to knock off at night, by the instructions of the manager.

1623. Then, the management fixed the time of knocking off and commencing; and whether you were doing contract work, or work by the day, you still had to keep to the six hours?—Yes.

1624. Do you remember what your earnings were in six hours' work in Durham?—They varied as trade varied, according to the ruling prices of coal.

1625. Was there a sliding-scale the men were paid by?—No; the sliding-scale came into operation when I was about to leave the country; the average at the time was 5s. per day.

1626. How much a ton were you paid?—I think it was about 6½d. per ton.

1627. What was the thickness of the seam?—2ft. 10in.; that was the last seam; the seam previous was 4ft. There was no blasting required there.

1628. Had you to find your own lights?—Yes, in one of the mines.

1629. You worked with your own lamps?—No; they were all lighted with candles.

1630. Was there any mine in which you were allowed so much for candles?—Yes; in fact, they gave the candles.

1631. *Mr. Moody.*] Have you heard any remarks at the mine amongst the miners about the inexperience of the Government Inspector?—Yes, I have heard a lot of grumbling about the appointment of the Inspector. He is a gentleman I have only seen twice at the outside, and that was when he was travelling round the mine with Mr. Bishop. I do not know anything about his former career, but I have heard a lot said in connection with it—that he is not a practical coal-miner; and amongst some of the older hands at Brunnerton there seems to be a great aversion to his appointment.

1632. In your opinion, has the amalgamation of the mines affected the output of coal here, or interfered with the trade of the district?—I am not prepared to say that.

1633. *Mr. Brown.*] Have you any suggestions to make as to remedying the point that you have brought up—the abatements for instance, and in connection with the inspection?—If it was visited oftener I think the mine could be better worked.

1634. You think the mine has not been properly worked?—I think it has been a great detriment to the district at large; but for that there would have been more places and room for more men; certainly, there would not have been water in. There is another cause, and that is the pumping-gear. It is not sufficient to get out the water. If she was making ever so little over and