

1926. Of course you have a large number to go through—that is, at the Coal-pit Heath. What about the Brunner?—We proceed on a very simple principle. The Brunner coal skips come singly, or sometimes in twos or threes. There is an endless rope.

1927. How do you manage, then?—We extend the weighing from the commencement of the shift until near about the finish.

1928. What difference does it make, this coming in an endless rope?—Well, they come in a race from the Coal-pit Heath, and from the Brunner they come in ones, twos, and threes.

1929. Does that give rise to any difference of opinion between you and the check weighman?—I was going to explain what occasioned sometimes little disputes: If a truck comes out that we want to weigh, and it happens to be badly filled, the check-weighman might say that that truck has been upset in the mine, and we are not supposed to weigh tubs that have been upset. When a tub is upset they are supposed to mark it "Upset by the truckers."

1930. How does he mark it?—With a chalk. All tubs so marked, of course, we do not weigh. Occasionally tubs may appear not well filled, but not marked "Upset;" and hence the slight differences between the two weighmen.

1931. *Mr. Brown.*] Will you explain the system upon which those Brunner tubs are selected, as they come singly out of the mine?—We take three tubs to weigh—any numbers, of course, that we want we take. As there is only a limited number of men in the Brunner this last eight months—but I could not be particular to a month or two—we have only had twelve or thirteen numbers running. We weigh two or three in a given time, and then rest awhile, and then take another two or three in a given time, so as to extend it over the whole shift, as we had only twelve or thirteen numbers during the entire shift.

1932. We will take the Coal-pit Heath first, where they work in the solid coal—during the time you have been weighing in the Coal-pit Heath?—There has been some working in the solid coal; but during the last few months there have been mostly all pillars.

1933. Is there not still some working in the solid?—Oh, yes; they are still taking whole coal from the bord-workings.

1934. In the whole coal, can you give us some figures, so that we might arrive at the average weight of the tubs, and the average number the men put out, also the extreme number that a man puts out?—I do not think we could do that for the whole coal; I do not think that we could make any distinction.

1935. I should like to know, are those weights taken before or after screening?—In March we commenced the gross weight; prior to that it was screened coal.

1936. Where did you take the weights then, at that time? How did you manage after screening it?—We have a separate screen—what we call the "Billy Fair-play." We tip the skip on to the screen, and when it is screened we weigh it below the screen. That is what is called the "Billy Fair-play."

1937. The company take delivery of the whole coal unscreened, whether they are paying on the screened or unscreened?—They take it on the unscreened. They were paying the men on the screened coal.

1938. But even when paying on the screened coal, do not the company take delivery on the unscreened?—Sometimes they do and sometimes they do not. The company have shoots put over their screens when they want unscreened coal; but when they want to screen the coal they take up these shoots.

1939. How are the weights in the Billy Fair-play adjusted,—what kind of a weighing-machine is it?—It is a platform weighbridge, and, of course, the box is placed upon the platform.

1940. I suppose that is checked occasionally?—Yes; the weighbridge is checked both by myself and the check-weighman. We have proper Government stamped weights to test it with.

1941. *The Chairman.*] Now, you say you cannot distinguish the solid coal from the other?—No.

1942. Will you tell us about the Coal-pit Heath screened coal? Could you tell us anything about the weights got by the miners in the skips? How do they manage in shifting or changing places? Do they come and take their mates' numbers?—As a rule they do; during the last few weeks before they stopped altogether. I produce my day-book and also my pay-book.

1943. That is for the whole period?—Yes.

1944. Is this for the Brunner or Coal-pit Heath?—Both; also the Wallsend, which was kept by Walter Lover.

1945. Is he at the mine now?—Yes; he still lives at Brunner.

1946. Was that on the same system?—Yes. Since the gross weight was adopted at Wallsend they might weigh two for each day, and sometimes three or sometimes four for each pair.

1947. In any case, their books represent the accepted weight as between the miners and the company?—Yes, because they are checked every day and every fortnight.

1948. What is the difference in the system?—The only difference is perhaps this: that the Brunner is an easier method of keeping the books.

1949. How do you check the gross coal? How is it weighed?—We take the tubs on the same principle as I have described; but we weigh the coal and the tub altogether first, then we empty the skip and weigh the tub alone, and deduct. There was a special weighbridge on the same principle fixed on the top; the other was below. Of course there is a deduction for stone.

1950. How do you do that?—When we weighed on the Billy Fair-play it was my duty to take out whatever stone I got before weighing the coal.

1951. And with the other system do you take out all the stone?—We could not take the stone out so well; we did so for a time, but we gave it up, because the men and the manager, Mr. Bishop, agreed to deduct 26lb. for stone out of each tub.

1952. Was that ever complained against by any of the men?—Not that I know of.