

A vessel coming in in ballast could be loaded and despatched in the same tide, whereas at present the most we can do is to send a vessel away at the next tide.

2360. It takes three tides?—If she came in this morning she would go away this evening. A vessel coming in in ballast, say, by this morning's tide could be despatched by this evening's tide—twelve hours.

2361. At what rate can you load coal into a vessel from these hopper-trucks?—At about 100 tons an hour.

2362. Then, the delay you mention would be from the coal not coming forward, not from the increased facility?—Which delay?

2363. You say that at present there is a delay, and if there was storage for 2,000 tons it would be an advantage?—Yes.

2364. You mean, of course, that the coal would be in self-delivering staiths, in order to save time?—Yes.

2365. And to benefit the shipping from the company's point of view?—Yes.

2366. No other storage would effect this?—I mean that no other storage gives the despatch to the ships so that a vessel could load immediately she arrives.

2367. *Mr. Brown.*] You are speaking from a shipping point of view?—Of course.

2368. Have you had any delays in consequence of the short delivery of coal?—We have had cases where ships have arrived and there has been no stock of coal on hand in the trucks. Then steamers have had to wait until the coal was mined.

2369. *The Chairman.*] That, of course, would not affect the Union Steamship Company, I suppose, under their arrangement, as far as demurrage was concerned?—No.

2370. But, if it was an outside ship, would demurrage be charged in consequence?—Certainly it is possible that it might. Of course, it would depend on the terms of the charter-party as to the number of lay-by days.

2371. *Mr. Moody.*] Is there much household or screened coal sent from here?—Yes, a great deal.

2372. *The Chairman.*] How are the cargoes arranged? Does one vessel take a cargo of household coal and another a cargo of whole coal?—Not always. Sometimes it is assorted coal, and coke forms part of the cargo.

2373. *Mr. Moody.*] Supposing a vessel comes in and wants a cargo of screened or household coal, and the principal part of the railway-wagons are filled with unscreened coal, they would be stopped?—They would have to wait then until a vessel came in for the unscreened coal, to empty the wagons. But all the wagons would not be full of the unscreened coal; some would be full of the household coal. They would discharge those first, and then send them to the mine and get them refilled.

2374. It would depend on the trucks that were occupied?—It would, of course.

2375. *The Chairman.*] Have you any record of the period when the mines started after they were closed in July—they started some time in August—when they were working under an arrangement with the miners for payment on whole coal? Have you any record to show whether there was less or more screened coal exported during that period?—I have no record of that.

2376. You could not say whether the company at that time took most of the whole coal for steam-service?—No, I could not say.

2377. *Mr. Moody.*] Of course, an extra quantity of wagons would remedy the delay to which I referred just now?—Yes, an extra number would. They have two hundred odd now.

2378. That would be the only remedy for it, unless they had those coal-boxes here?—If we had another two hundred wagons it would remedy it.

2379. Or the coal-boxes to hold 200 or 300 tons of each coal: that would assist it?—Yes. And, as showing the interruptions to the shipping of the place and the period for which vessels have to lay loading, I produce the office record.

2380. You have not the causes of delay shown there?—No; only the different arrivals and departures.

2381. Do you recollect the time before the cranes were erected?—Yes, I do.

2382. They had shoots here?—Yes.

2383. You have an idea of what you consider the best mode of shipping coal, whether by the cranes or by those shoots?—I have a distinct idea about that.

2384. Which do you think the most expeditious method?—I consider the hydraulic cranes far and away the best. They are the most expeditious means, and are a great saving to the breakage of the coal. This coal is very brittle, and the less handling it has the better. For that reason, having staiths or bins, and for the coal to be put in the hopper-wagons again, would be to place the coal at a disadvantage.

2385. But they could ship it from these staiths into the vessels?—Some, of course, would not receive any extra handling; but to place it in the bins, and then remove it into the hopper-wagons to be discharged into the ship, would give it two extra handlings.

2386. *The Chairman.*] Do you have many complaints made to the office of the state in which the coal arrives at other ports?—Such complaints would not come to me.

2387. *Mr. Brown.*] Steamers themselves use the whole coal?—No, they do not; they use the small coal.

2388. *Mr. Moody.*] Unscreened?—Yes, unscreened.

2389. *The Chairman.*] That is, the whole coal? I mean the coal that comes straight out and is never screened: that is what they use?—Yes; what they call steamer coal.

2390. *Mr. Brown.*] Do you know for what purposes the screened coal is generally used?—For household purposes, I understand.

2391. And the gas companies, what do they use?—Yes, screened coal is preferred for the gas-works.