

could not tell you at all what his duties are. The mine-manager always received the Inspector, and I therefore had no knowledge of what his duties were or what he did.

2457. *The Chairman.*] Have you issued any instructions as to the duties of the mine-manager respecting the frequency of his visits to the mine?—No. It is laid down in the rules, and he has no instructions other than what are contained in them. [Exhibit No. 2 referred to.]

2458. Had you any correspondence with the Railway Commissioners recommending the removal of the stages that were on the wharf, from which the coal was delivered by shoots, and the substitution of hydraulic cranes as a means of loading?—I had correspondence urging the adoption of the hydraulic cranes in preference to loading through shoots.

2459. Were you dissatisfied with the working of the stages then?—Yes.

2460. And was it on your representation that the new method was adopted?—I could not say that.

2461. *Mr. Moody.*] Have you a copy of that correspondence?—I regard as very informal any representations I made on the subject. I might have.

2462. *The Chairman.*] Your point of recommendation was that instead of staiths there should be hydraulic cranes?—That the mode of loading should be by cranes. As a company, we urged the loading by cranes instead of shoots, as being easier on the coal in regard to breakage. Then the Harbour Board asked for steam-cranes, and they got hydraulics. I was a member of the Harbour Board at the time. In fact, I was Chairman of the Board, and therefore I remember what occurred.

2463. How has that water in the Coal-pit Heath Mine accumulated? You have said that pumping has not been stopped in consequence of the strike, in your evidence, I think?—Yes; I said that the water was there before the strike. It got there for want of sufficient pumping-power.

2464. It was not want of a sufficient pump?—It was want of sufficient boiler for steam.

2465. When did that first come to your notice as manager—that the steam-generating power was insufficient?—It came to our notice a couple of months before the strike occurred.

2466. And did you apprehend from that it would diminish the working-space in the mines—that if the water gained on you you would have less mine-room?—We were hopeful that possibly with the present power we might be able to overtake it; and there is only a small area to work out before reaching a fault which has not yet been explored.

2467. Have these faults been explored, or has any scheme been considered for extending the working beyond the fault?—They have been partly explored. The work in the Brunner Mine, for instance, clearly indicates where the coal is beyond the main fault, and we are taking steps to work that. It is a question of pumping-power there also, and it cannot be commanded by steam. It is too far away from the boilers for the pumps to be worked by steam, and we have had to consider what is the motive-power to be applied for that purpose. Before the amalgamation I had provided an air-compressor for that purpose, but it is now considered by the manager that electric power might be better than compressed air; and we have in Wellington an electric power ready to be proceeded with, and which would have been erected had it not been for the strike.

2468. Is the water that goes into the Coal-pit Heath Mine proper mine-water, or is it supposed to be surface-water?—It is supposed to be surface-water.

2469. How has that got in?—It has got in through the crevices all over the surface.

2470. Have you had to consider how far those crevices have been widened or increased by taking out the pillars and so increasing the surface-water?—I have no opinion on that. I am not an expert on that, but I may say, however, that in my opinion it has not been increased much. That is my private impression. These rents are all over the locality before the ground is worked at all underneath.

2471. Have any formed since the ground was worked?—I am not aware of any since.

2472. *Mr. Brown.*] Have there been any miners' places lost in the Coal-pit Heath through the rising of the water lately?—I cannot answer that, but I do not think so, lately. Any loss would only be temporary until we could get the water pumped out again. And I might say that we have one of our main boilers shifted—indeed, we have shifted two. Some time ago we shifted one, and now there is a second one in the course of erection from Wallsend to pump this Coal-pit Heath Mine; and that would have been done long since but for the suspension by the strike, which stopped everything. We could not afford to go on with the expense that would be incurred.

2473. *The Chairman.*] Is there as much mine-room at present for providing places for the miners as there was before the strike?—There is, excepting Wallsend.

2474. I am referring to the last strike?—I consider there is the same space now available as there was when they went out last time.

2475. The mine has not deteriorated, nor is less able to afford employment? The field for employment has not been reduced?—I expect it will cost a little to put it in order; but in two or three weeks after resuming we expect to be at the same point where we left off.

2476. How many places will that afford for two men each at Coal-pit Heath and Brunner?—At the present time they will only afford about thirty working-places.

2477. That would be sixty men?—Yes, sixty men for one shift.

2478. That is a hundred and twenty miners, and how many day-wage men in proportion?—There are about double the quantity.

2479. About as many more, or two hundred and forty in all?—Yes. And I may say that number may be increased one-half by working three men in a place, as had been done before they left their work.

2480. Is that a system which is good either for the miners or the company? Can three men really work in one place at one time? Is it not a case of three men doing two men's work?—They elected to do it in order that employment might be found for them all. It is not quite so advantageous as two.