

2925. *Mr. Moody.*] Have you a copy of that report?—I will put in a copy of the report, and you will see a joint note attached to it.

2926. *The Chairman.*] How frequently do you visit the mine?—Two or three times a week, sometimes two or three times a day.

2927. You are never a month without going into the mine?—I would not be.

2928. *Mr. Moody.*] I suppose when you find it necessary you go in?—And many times when I do not think it necessary. I go to see what is going on there. I do not wait until something calls me there.

2929. *Mr. Brown.*] Has ever any complaint appeared in the Inspector's book as to the manager not having visited the mine sufficiently?—No.

2930. *The Chairman.*] Would there be any special danger to new hands being employed in the mine—provided they were miners having had experience elsewhere—arising from anything peculiar in the nature of the mine?—Provided they had been experienced miners elsewhere, there would be no special danger. For some time they would want a little more supervision.

2931. *Mr. Moody.*] Until they got used to the place?—Yes.

2932. *The Chairman.*] Could the number of men who are paid day-wages in proportion to the number of hewers be decreased with advantage?—No; there is very little room for a decrease in the number of day-wage people. That fluctuates considerably according to the position of the places.

2933. Is it possible that the cost of the coal is increased by an unnecessary expenditure on day-wage labour?—No; there is no unnecessary labour. All the labour put on has been on necessary work.

2934. Is there anything in the nature of the working in the mine that causes an undue loss of time to the hewers in setting in their timber?—No. In the Coal-pit Heath working the ground is high, and it takes a little extra time to set the timber; but, on the other hand, they have the advantage of the high seams, yielding a larger proportion of coal with one undercutting.

2935. What led to the stoppage of the Brunner Mine for some time, which you referred to in your previous evidence?—There was a stoppage of four months' duration.

2936. That was in the beginning of 1889?—Yes.

2937. And the cause of that was?—Want of sale.

2938. Was there no other cause?—No; we did not ship enough to keep the whole of the mines going.

2939. Had it anything to do with the breaking of the rope?—No, nothing whatever. We had a new rope on the ground to put on if we required it; but we did not deem it necessary to put the rope on.

2940. *Mr. Brown.*] Had the demand, then, fallen away at that time?—The demand was falling away, and it was after the Newcastle strike had been ended. We had filled up all our dépôts and hulks.

2941. You mean the Union Steamship Company's dépôts and hulks?—Yes; it was in the slack season, the summer time.

2942. *The Chairman.*] Has there been any weakness of the roof in the Coal-pit Heath in the neighbourhood of the roads by the taking-out of pillars?—No.

2943. How far have the cracks on the surface been produced by the taking-out of the pillars in the Coal-pit Heath?—I cannot say whether it was due to the taking-out of pillars or not. The roof may crack and the pillars be left intact as the working goes on, even in the first working. I do not attribute the breaking of the roof or the cracking of the surface to the taking-out of the pillars. The pillars are not taken out to that extent.

2944. Have these surface-breaks been increasing of late years?—I do not know that they have. Of course, I have only the two years' experience since the amalgamation, so far as Coal-pit Heath is concerned, and I found there had been old cracks previous to this that had been filled up, because on examining the surface we found them.

2945. Is it by these breaks that the surface-water gets access to the mine?—I think it is partly owing to that.

2946. Are there any surface-breaks over the Brunner Mine?—There must be surface-breaks, but we have not found them.

2947. Have you taken any steps to divert the surface-water from entering these breaks?—We have been taking out the creek-beds, and diverting the water where we found it necessary.

2948. What amount of labour has been expended?—We have had as many as from fifteen to twenty men employed on them; and that extra labour, and the cost of it, will be all shown in the pay-sheets put before you, under a separate heading.

2949. Are there no splits employed in guiding and controlling the ventilation?—Well, we have had no district large enough to necessitate splitting the air.

2950. Has there ever been any want of good air at the face?—Not during my time.

2951. Have any complaints been entered in the Mine-inspectors' book?—Not in the Inspectors' book. I do not think so.

2952. Would you expect them to be entered if they found anything wrong?—Yes. I have had my attention called to the air requiring to be guided to the face.

2953. And has that been attended to?—Yes, attended to immediately. Those are things which occur daily in mining to any extent.

2954. *Mr. Moody.*] Do you use much bratticing?—We have in the Wallsend. The Brunner does not require much bratticing because we have no gas there.

2955. You had gas in the Coal-pit Heath?—Yes, and in the Wallsend—more in the Wallsend.

2956. *The Chairman.*] What is the market-value of the Wallsend coal?—I cannot say what the prices are as compared with any of the others.