

512. Has surface-water gained access to the mine?—Yes; but that has only taken place in Pit Heath. That is naturally where you would expect the water to gather.

513. The water can easily find its way down, I suppose?—Yes.

514. Then, beyond the fault what coal did you take out?—The workings are shown on the plan.

515. Were they extensive?—Yes; there is about sixty acres in extent.

516. What was the thickness of the seam you got beyond the fault?—At first it was something like 15ft., and then it came down. I do not suppose the average was more than 7½ft. We have had it down to 5ft. with rolls coming in.

517. Where did these rolls come in?—We have some in the floor, but mostly in the roof.

518. Is there any change in the nature of the roof where the rolls occur?—Yes; sometimes there are loose and detached pieces. They detach themselves from the main rock roof.

519. What was the output from beyond the first fault? What have you already won for the return of £4,000 in the mine?—I could easily supply a return showing that output. The cost of proving the fault is not covered by the £4,000 stated as having been spent after I took charge. The work must have cost thousands prior to my taking the management. I put the quantity of coal worked from this area at 250,000 tons.

520. What was the nature of the roof where those rolls came in?—It was practically the same sandstone roof. The workings were continued until we met another fault.

521. What is the level of your last drive beyond the fault? How does it relate to the different levels on the old workings?—The present working-level is to the rise of water-level shown on old plan.

522. Has all the coal been worked out?—It has been worked to the rise, and now we are working the pillars. It is desirable that they should be taken out, as the longer they stand the more difficult they are to get and the more they are deteriorated. I regret sometimes they are not worked quicker.

523. Are your workings limited on the level beyond the fault?—Yes, they are limited by a second fault.

524. What is the nature of that fault?—So far as we have proved it, the coal is pinched out.

525. What is the thickness of the coal when it reaches this pinch?—About 6ft. thick. At the second fault it is 6ft. thick.

526. How far had you to drive before you picked up the coal beyond that fault?—We have not picked it up yet. We put a prospecting drive in for about 12 chains on a thin seam of coal. The work done here has cost about £1,500.

527. Did you follow that coal on the level?—Yes, without any displacement.

528. Have you ever driven in the direction of the rise on the dip for the purpose of seeing if the seam is displaced?—No; we have gone neither to one side nor the other, but we put a borehole down in the entrance of the prospecting-tunnel and found no coal. We put it down 140ft.

529. What did you pass through?—Grit like the roof over the coal.

530. So that there is a possibility that the coal might be displaced downwards beyond the fault?—It may be, but the strata underlying the coal in the Brunner field are like the strata overlying it. The borehole is not by any means a certain indication of our seams below water-level, and the frequent ridges in the roof change the apparent irregularity in the plane.

531. During your management of the mines, have there been many interruptions or stoppages of the workings?—No; very few indeed. The first six years we had no interruptions in consequence of differences with our workmen.

532. Had you any through stoppages by the railway, or any defects in the mine, or through not not having coal won, so to speak?—No, nothing of that kind; but we have had stoppages through bad weather, causing a bad bar and thus preventing shipping.

533. That has been the only cause of stoppage?—Yes, during the last six years. Then, this trouble began at the beginning of this year.

534. Not before this year?—No; we had no stoppage with our men until this year.

535. Would you describe how the stoppages have arisen? Would the want of storage have any effect in causing interruptions?—It would have partly obviated the interruptions had there been storage.

536. Did a deficiency in shipping and the state of the bar ever stop the mines?—I dare say we have had occasional interruptions in that way.

537. Through want of tonnage?—Yes.

538. When such stoppages occur are the whole of the men knocked off work?—A large portion of the underground workmen are knocked off—that is, the coal-hewers—and a number of the surface-men. Of course, the carpenters and the men that we always have to keep going are not knocked off.

539. What notice do you give them?—We give them no notice. It is simply a matter of trucks, and when they are filled up there is a block.

540. What is the greatest duration of a block?—I have known a week on the occasion of a bad bar.

541. Has that occurred frequently in recent times?—No.

542. Do you think this has been obviated by the harbour improvements?—Yes, largely.

543. Now we come to the interruptions from strikes: they have been confined to this year?—Yes.

544. Can you put us in possession of such points as the causes that led up to them, and what are the exact demands of the men?—On the 24th February I was served with a notice by the miners that they desired to change the system of weighing from the screened coal, which is known as the "Billy Fairplay."