

681. You do not know the cause?—No.

682. *Mr. Moody.*] Can you supply a statement of the tonnage prices paid to the coal-miners for the different methods of coal-getting during your management; also the hours constituting a day's work, with dates of alteration, if any, during the same period?—I will supply those statements. The hewing rates were always paid on screened coal until the last short period before the stoppage. When I came here first the price was 3s. per ton for screened coal.

683. I want to know if any alterations have been made in hewing-prices since?—In 1882 the hewing-price was 3s. per ton; it continued at 3s. for some two or three years, with the exception of a small portion of the works in the rise, when we had to give an advance per ton in consequence of the amount of slack. When opening out these works beyond the fault there was a readjustment of prices demanded, and we then agreed to pay 4s. per ton: that was about five years ago, in 1885 or 1886.

684. In what does the coal-miners' employment consist besides actual coal-getting?—The coal-miners' employment consists of hewing coal and trucking it to their bord end.

685. No laying-down of rails?—No; but they set their own timber.

686. Where is the timber required by the miners placed?—It is put on a truck and delivered to them; they take it into the face.

687. Delivered on the main road?—Yes. Rule No. 37 bears on the question of timber.

688. Where do you place the empty trucks?—They are taken to the bord ends.

689. They are removed from the bord ends to the face?—Yes. The length of the bord is 50 yards. The headings are broken away at 50 yards. There are occasional times when they go over that, and we sometimes have trouble with them on that account.

690. After loading the skips in their working place, do the miners remove them?—Yes, to the bord end; they run them down to the first jig. So far, the miners have had their coal free before this stoppage took place. Then we told them in future we would charge them at the rate of 7s. 6d. per ton for their screened coal. It is the best nut-coal, screened or unscreened as it comes from the mine: that would amount to about 4s. a dray-load delivered at their homes; they pay 2s. a load for cartage.

691. *The Chairman.*] In removing the pillars, do you find them much damaged or crushed?—There are some of them severely crushed, but, as I have mentioned, there are places in the mine where the solid coal even is in a state of crush.

692. That is near the pillar-working, I expect?—It is difficult to account for it. As soon as you drive through the solid pillar you will find the incline rise so much that you have to take up the bottom and relay the road.

693. Do you consider the same prices should be paid for pillar-work as in the whole coal?—I think pillar-work should be done at a lower price, as it can be done at a greater advantage to the miners. Pillar-coal should be cheaper, because in England I have known a difference where the price is lower by 15 or 20 per cent. I think it is certainly worth 20 per cent. of the whole coal.

694. Have you ever known of any coal-mine in which the same prices are paid for pillar-work as are paid in the same mine for solid or whole coal?—It is certainly not a rule in the North of England. I do not know what it is in other parts.

695. When you speak of two shifts a day, at what time do they begin?—The first one begins at 6 o'clock in the morning, and it knocks off at 2 o'clock in the afternoon; then the next shift begins.

696. So you then get two men's day's work out of the mines each day?—Yes.

697. How many men are in the mine at one time when the shift is working?—There are about forty to forty-five men in the Brunner Mine—that is, hewers and truckers—and rather less in the Coal-pit Heath. About seventy-five altogether.

698. What is the quantity and quality of the coal used on the fireclay-works and for coke-ovens respectively?—It appears in the return I have put in; also the quantity of slack used in making coke.

699. What amount of coal has gone to waste?—It is on the returns. The waste since the 10th March has been 1,965 tons, out of 23,495 tons on which wages are paid.

700. Do you let the fireclay-work by day work?—We let it by the cubic yard. We provide a trucker for it. Two men in the face at so much a cubic yard.

701. Do they deliver it on the surface?—We keep the trucking-plant. It runs about 4s. a cubic yard. Taking truckers' wages into consideration the whole cost was about 5s. outside.

702. Can you answer this question in the Commission, viz.: "the market value of such of the said works, machinery, and appliances as have been from time to time in use, corresponding with the annual exports hereinbefore mentioned"?—We have a valuation of the works and plant as it was taken for the amalgamation, to which must be added the cost of buildings (Exhibit No. 16).

703. Can you answer the following question in the Commission: "the return which the lessees have been getting from time to time, and could probably get in the future, as interest on the market value of the works, machinery, and appliances in use as aforesaid"?—Looking at it in that way, years ago the Brunner Mine was in a position to produce a much larger output without any plant at all. We have now a plant capable of producing a much larger output than we have trade for.

704. Were the valuations exactly in this form as shown in Exhibit No. 16?—That is a copy of the inventory taken since then. It is practically in the same form in which the buildings, plant, and machinery were taken altogether.

705. Do the miners find their own tools and powder?—Yes.

706. Do they pay for their own sharpening?—No; we pay for that. The powder is all deducted before making up the average wages. We supply them with powder from a store. The difficulty would be for them to get it otherwise in proper quantities.