

707. *Mr. Brown.*] In this return marked No. 16, for movable plant in use there is £11,296 in the Wallsend Mine. How could this be in use if the Wallsend Mine was closed?—The explanation of that is that this inventory is only made up to 30th June before the mine was closed.

708. Is that return (No. 13) a return of unscreened coal?—Yes.

709. Previous to that you had screened coal?—Yes. That was in accordance with the system of payment. There was no change in the character of the work; I mean in the character of the coal that was worked. We had got through the whole coal working at the time that return was made up to. We then had no whole coal coming out. The unscreened system had not been given effect to. With the pillar-work the coal was still paid for on the screened-coal system.

710. The period from the 10th March to July is all pillar-working?—Yes; except in the Wallsend Mine.

711. Have you any by-laws?—No. We were nearly having a big strike over some proposed by-laws, and they were never given effect to.

712. Will you please explain why, for the period previous to the 8th March, the tonnage upon which wages are paid is less than the tonnage upon which royalty is paid?—That is due to paying on the screened coal, excluding nut.

713. For the period after the 8th March the reverse appears to be the case?—In that period we paid the miners on everything that came out of the mine.

714. In that return (No. 12) under the head of "Days worked," you mean in shifts?—Yes.

715. The men supply themselves with stores as they please, I suppose?—Yes, at the various shops.

716. You would not have had so much trouble with the men had they not affiliated themselves with the Maritime Council?—No; we had very little trouble before that.

717. *The Chairman.*] Is there much gas in the mines?—The Coal-pit Heath we worked with naked lights, also the Brunner.

718. Have there been many accidents from fire?—There was an accident in Wallsend which gave rise to an inquiry some time back: that was previous to my taking charge of the mine. Since I took charge there have been none.

719. Is the inspection of the mine satisfactorily performed? Is the Act carried out satisfactorily?—Yes.

720. You are, I suppose, relieved of all responsibility?—I do not think the object of inspection is to relieve the manager of responsibility.

721. Does the Inspector give you a certificate?—No; he gives us no information at all on the subject. He goes away and leaves us entirely in the dark, unless he finds some cause to write about something, until the end of the year, when he presents his report to Parliament.

722. Do you think that is a good plan?—I do not think so. I think he ought to call attention to any defects.

723. How often is the inspection made?—They are not very frequent—about once every four, five, or six months. The Inspector has no regular times for coming, and he does not advise us when he is coming. The miners have been continually agitating for a resident local Inspector.

724. You consider the miners generally a steady lot?—Yes, I consider them a very steady lot on the whole.

Mr. HUGH CALDERS sworn and examined.

725. *The Chairman.*] What are you, Mr. Calders?—I am Chief Postmaster for the Greymouth Postal District.

726. How long have you been in charge here?—Upwards of seven years.

727. Is the Brunnerton Post Office in your district?—It is.

728. Among your other duties you have charge of the Post Office Savings-bank accounts?—Yes, I have.

729. Can you give us any idea of the population of Brunnerton?—It has been estimated by my Postmaster there, and by several others, and judging from my own knowledge of the population, and the number of houses in the town, I should think the population would be about two thousand persons.

730. What proportion of these would be male adults?—I should think, roughly estimated, about five hundred men.

731. Their chief occupation, I presume, is coal-mining?—Yes.

732. Is there any other business there that employs a large number of men beyond the coal-mining industry and the stores?—No; it may be taken as a coal-mining population.

733. Can you tell the Commissioners, in general terms, the number of depositors in the Post Office Savings-bank for the past three years in Brunnerton, at the same time the amounts deposited, so that we can get an average of the amounts withdrawn?—I furnish herewith a statement which has been prepared, and the total balances and principal of depositors. [Statement produced and marked No. 24 Exhibit.]

MONDAY, 20TH OCTOBER, 1890.

Mr. SAMUEL ANDREW sworn and examined.

734. *The Chairman.*] What do you describe yourself as, Mr. Andrew?—A coal-miner.

735. How long have you been a coal-miner?—Fourteen years.

736. How long have you been in New Zealand?—Fifteen years.

737. How long have you been in the Brunner Mine?—It must be about fourteen years since I first went to work there.

738. Have you ever mined anywhere else?—Yes, at Denniston Hill, but first at Waimangaroa—that is, the Wellington Mine—then at Denniston, and then since at Mokihinui. I returned