

773. *The Chairman.*] Then by the Wallsend?—No; the Brunner was stopped just after that.

774. When was the Tyneside stopped?—Just after the amalgamation.

775. And the Brunner also after the amalgamation?—Yes.

776. And the Wallsend?—Yes. In May of 1889 there were thirty men stopped at Wallsend. The Brunner Mine was not wholly stopped. There were 200 men engaged in the Brunner Mine.

777. On the matter of the Tyneside, what occurred before the amalgamation?—I may explain that I did not consider I should be required to answer any of these questions. Such questions as these were to be answered by Mr. Ancell before the Committee.

778. You only know that the Tyneside was stopped and the Brunner was partially stopped?—I know, of course, that the Tyneside stopped at the time of the amalgamation, and has never worked since. Thirty men were thrown out of employment.

779. *Mr. Brown.*] Did that include surface-men and miners as well? You say there was a partial stoppage of the Brunner?—Yes; there were sixty-six men discharged from the Brunner in December, 1888; and in January, 1889, about the same number; and the men stopped completely in March.

780. For how long?—It was stopped until July, 1889.

781. Do you know the cause of that stoppage?—The cause given by the company was that there was no sale for the coal at all.

782. *The Chairman.*] How was it intimated to the men? Was it stuck up in the mine or stated to the men?—Yes; it was stated to the men. That was one statement made; but, about a week after the mine was stopped, the men were called together and asked by the manager to take 6d. per ton reduction.

783. Did that affect the whole of the men or only the hewers?—The hewers.

784. What had they been getting before?—This reduction was to be upon 4s. for the screened coal.

785. When they resumed in July what was the state of things?—They reopened at the old prices, 4s. per ton for screened coal.

786. This only affected the Brunner Mine?—Yes.

787. What was the reason alleged for this reduction?—That the mine would not pay. That was the reason the manager conveyed to me as secretary, in writing.

788. What were the workings in—solid or pillars?—They were in pillars.

789. Did the terms of the reduction refer to the difference in the value of pillar-coal as against solid?—Yes.

790. Then there was a further reason given for the reduction?—The manager also said that the mine would not pay unless the reduction was accepted.

791. *Mr. Brown.*] What was the reason of the reduction in January and December?—Because it was pillar-working.

792. What was the alleged reason of the previous reduction when you say there were sixty-six men reduced, and a similar number in 1889?—The only reason I ever heard was that there was not sufficient sale.

793. They only reduced the quantity of men?—Yes. The output was larger than they required.

794. *The Chairman.*] Now, about this pillar-coal: is it easier to work pillar-coal than solid—can a man do more in a given time? How many tons could you yourself get out in a day in the screened coal?—Well, in the net weight—the skips carry such differences of weight.

795. Can you tell what is about the average per day?—I should say about $3\frac{1}{2}$ tons of screened coal.

796. Did you ever work in pillar-coal when it was screened before it was weighed?—Yes.

797. What did you get out then in the pillars?—About $3\frac{1}{2}$ tons of screened in the bords; but that is in the best sort of coal for working.

798. What would you get for screened coal in pillar-working? You say you would get seven skips in the one: how much would you get in the other?—Probably about 5 tons, but I cannot say definitely; I should prefer to answer these questions afterwards if you would allow me, as it is difficult to remember what one's average wages were. There is so much difference. For instance, the quantities I have mentioned are for the best sort of coal. There are other times when a man would be working for very low wages—when the coal is very soft.

799. What is the lowest you have ever made?—In the pillar-workings, when there was payment for screened coal, I have earned down to 8s. a day: that is 2 tons.

800. We want now your average in bord coal?—You can put out 5 tons where you can take small, big, and everything.

801. What used you to get out of a bord?—It is a difficult thing to give an exact average. The mines are so different.

802. You have worked in solid in the Brunner. What did you probably do as a good day's work?—Rather over 3 tons in screened coal.

803. If you ever worked in the Brunner Mine, where you got the whole coal out of the solid, what did you get then?—It is five years ago since I worked in the solid.

804. At that time did you get paid for the whole coal without screening?—It was only screened coal that was paid 4s. for. Sometimes at Brunner the men have got very high wages, and sometimes very low.

805. What do you call a very fair amount in coal?—About 4 tons of screened coal in the Brunner—that is, both from the pillar and from solid as well.

806. What is the most the men have made in pillar-coal?—I do not know the highest; the check-weighman will be able to give evidence about that. I myself have put out 5 tons, but I do not remember the maximum.