

was an arbitration board appointed to find what was an equivalent price in the gross weight for the net weight. The price was found to be 2s. 6½d., I think, at that time.

883. Was that accepted by the miners?—No. I am not certain of the prices found for the other two mines, but I am nearly positive it was 2s. 8d. for the Wallsend.

884. You do not consider that any of these differences between the company and the miners led to a strike?—There was nothing in the nature of a strike at the time.

885. Why was the arbitration price not accepted? Was there any desire for an increased rate of pay at that time?—In the first place, I think some of the men were not satisfied that the price was an equivalent. I know I have heard it generally given as an opinion by a good many that the prices as found by the arbitrators were not equivalent.

886. *Mr. Brown.*] Had they been satisfied on that point would they have accepted that price as brought out by the arbitration?—I cannot say. I was then working on the roads more as a deputy. I did not attend union meetings at that time, although I was in the union, and so I was not then fully acquainted with the men's feelings.

887. Well, you have given no evidence of what occurred in March. You say that the company gave way, and granted 2s. 10d. on the whole coal in the Wallsend and Coal-pit Heath Mines, both pillar and solid workings?—Yes; the prices were uniform except in the case of the Brunner pillars, which was 2s. 6d.

888. Then, you have already told us that the matter was referred to arbitration and settled, and this scale went on for sixteen weeks?—Yes.

889. And then the lock-out took place when the company requested the miners to accept a reduction of 20 per cent. or arbitration?—Yes.

890. How was it that the mine was not carried on while the matter was under arbitration?—The terms offered were not accepted; so there was a lock-out.

891. Was the arbitration accepted?—No.

892. Was the 20 per cent. reduction accepted?—No. They received notice that the mine would be closed on a certain day unless certain terms were conceded. In fact the miners got notice to quit, which was a lock-out.

893. *The Chairman.*] In the case of a lock-out do your rules offer assistance, and do the affiliated rules apply?—Yes; it is viewed in the same light as a strike.

894. Is that view of it also accepted by the affiliated unions under the Maritime Council? Do they look upon it in the light of a strike?—Of course the conditions have to be agreed to. It is always understood that one body shall inform the others what the conditions of the dispute are. They do not support one another without some explanation. It must be explained and proved to be necessary.

895. Was there any explanation or notice offered to the Maritime Council by the Miners' Association of this lock-out?—On the 21st July notice was given.

896. To whom?—To the Amalgamated Miners' and Labourers' Association, and to the Maritime Council, which would of course include the whole.

897. Have you got a copy of that notice? Was it in the form of a letter?—Yes.

898. What reply was made?—The reply was to the effect that the local branch of the union would be supported in resisting the reduction.

899. Was any support given?—Yes.

900. In what form?—In the form of money, partly.

901. Did they call out the seamen on board the steamers?—No.

902. Can you say why not?—It was not considered necessary.

903. Do you know of any reason why it should not be? You say you gave the necessary intimation, and they promised support, and they gave it partly in money. Did they impose conditions which were afterwards imposed in another struggle?—The Maritime Council did not consider it necessary in this case.

904. Did they explain the reason?—The reasons were satisfactory for the time being.

905. What were they?—That it was more to the interest of the union to localise the strike.

906. *Mr. Brown.*] Of course that does not really answer the question. I would ask you again, have you any idea of the reason? Was your Association consulted, or was it at your request or desire that the full strength of the combination was not exercised?—Yes; the union were satisfied that the best course was adopted.

907. Your union?—Yes.

908. How was it placed before the miners? You say that the local union was satisfied with the course adopted: how did they express satisfaction? Was there a meeting, and the whole thing there explained to them?—In the first place, if the strike were not localised it would have affected Westport, where there is no dispute whatever. There was no general question in that case; it was only a local question of wages. The matter was different altogether from the present circumstances. This is a question of unionism.

909. I will ask you again, how was that explained to the miners, and were they called together to express an opinion by ballot or vote or in any way in this matter?—The union business is being continuously voted on or debated by the body of the men themselves.

910. Do the delegates act on the instructions of the men when they are going to take a serious step, by first referring the question to a general ballot or consultation?—Yes.

911. Were you consulted before the subsequent general strike took place?—Yes.

912. And did you take the sense of the Miners' Association here?—Yes, locally.

913. And they agreed?—Yes. I can give you a case in point. In the Shag Point difficulty, for instance, there was no thought of bringing out the affiliated bodies on that account—there was not the slightest need for it; and Shag Point is a branch of the Association.

914. Was there not a strong threat to do it in that case?—Only in regard to the persons who