

940. *Mr. Moody.*] That is this last lock-out in July, 1890?—Yes.

941. *The Chairman.*] It is still flooded, is it not?—Yes; the water is still rising, I believe.

942. This brings us to the time of the shutting-up of the Wallsend Mine. That was during the time the mines were standing?—Yes. Of course if the dispute should end to-morrow there would still be 150 men out of employment.

943. You mean, after filling up all the places?—Yes.

944. How much of the workings are available?—The Kimberley workings are the only solid workings in the Coal-pit Heath at all.

945. How many men would that employ if the water were out?—It would employ sixty hewers at least.

946. Half of those out of employment if they started work now?—Yes. Of course a good many of them have gone away.

947. Have they taken any means to get that water out?—I do not know; but there is evidence to show that from time to time it is pumped out, and the miners taken on to the pillar-workings again; and then it stands, with all the water coming through the surface. The best block of coal is in the Kimberley. It is a solid block.

948. Is the pump kept going continuously?—It is kept going, but the pumping-gear cannot be sufficient.

949. Is the water rising now?—It is just above the very top working-level.

950. And while pumping operations are carried on?—Yes; always carried on. There are very few places open for working except the pillars.

951. How came the Wallsend to be closed?—The general reason given for the closing of the Wallsend is that the company want to prove faults.

952. *Mr. Moody.*] Was anything said about the quality of the coal and its not being workable?—Yes, there was something said about the quality of the coal. The coal on the north side of the river is considered a better class of coal, and the level has been standing at a fault for the last two years. In fact there have been no new works opened on that side since the amalgamation.

953. Is the mine worked out?—The mine is not worked out, because it is standing on pillars. There are no pillars taken out of the Wallsend yet, or the mine would soon be ruined. It cannot of course work unless there is new ground opened up. They must prove faults.

954. *The Chairman.*] You say 150 men would be idle to-morrow if the work were resumed. How many men would there be work for if the dispute were ended to-morrow, taking the mine in its present state?—I should not like to say how many the manager would put to work, but to keep men in a good condition there could, in my opinion, be no more than thirteen places available—that is, twenty-six men with double shifts.

955. *Mr. Moody.*] What about the Coal-pit Heath?—These are outcrop workings. The pillars, according to any practical mode of working a mine, near the edges at any rate, should not be worked until the dip is worked out, and the dip is standing in solid coal yet under water.

956. That is to say, these Kimberley workings should be worked out before the upper part of the field—the outer edge—should be worked at all?—Yes.

957. *The Chairman.*] Is there any reason except the water difficulty to prevent the Coal-pit Heath being worked?—I could not say.

958. If the Kimberley were pumped how many more men would it take?—There would be room for sixty coal-hewers. I do not know the number of faces.

959. How long would it take to pump the Kimberley?—I have no idea. The Brunner would take fifty-two men.

960. Is that the whole of the available space for mining at the present time?—I mean, of course, that it is possible to put men into the top level at the Coal-pit Heath, and they will perhaps be put there when the dispute ends, but it is a question whether the mine is not injured thereby, by opening for more surface-water.

961. *Mr. Brown.*] Then, these fifty-two men only would be able to work?—Yes; according to the ordinary mode of working.

962. And what proportion of surface-men would there be to these?—As many again. In fact, as far as the condition of the mine is concerned, it seems absolutely necessary that, if the mines are to continue employing the same number of men as hitherto, fault-proving must be pushed on and new works opened up. The company has done nothing for the last two years in this direction. There is really no coal available but the pillars, except what is shut up by faults.

963. *The Chairman.*] Is there not a mass of coal in the Brunner to the dip inside the first fault?—Yes; between the two faults.

964. Would that be available if they had pumping there?—If they commenced to work that it would injure the level. It would appear necessary that the dip drive should be driven lower down at first, and then an airway put in.

965. You mean the only coal immediately available is the pillar-workings in the Brunner and the Coal-pit Heath?—It is available if they wish to take it out.

966. Does that apply to working the pillars out to the rise in the Brunner? Does not that injure the chance of working the coal to the dip in the Brunner?—No; because they have not reached level yet. What I mean in regard to the dip is, if they commenced to work in regard to faults they would not be able to prove the second fault.

967. *Mr. Brown.*] The water comes in more freely now than it used to do?—There is greater difficulty now than ever there was.

968. Do you know if any arrangements are being made for fresh pipes?—Yes, I believe so, but I cannot give any particular information or opinion about it. I have heard so, and I think it only right that the attention of the Government should, at any rate, be drawn to the mode of working. There should be more stringent inspections than there have been. In fact, from the