

1069. Have you any idea how these dead-rents are arranged ; upon what basis?—No ; I have not the slightest idea.

1070. Do you know anything of the terms in connection with other mines—that they differ as regards output?—No ; but I notice by the evidence given before the Waste Lands Committee that they did differ in the royalties.

1071. You cannot tell why?—No ; I cannot.

1072. Each lease is a matter of negotiation?—Yes. It depends upon the position and facilities.

1073. Have there been any arrangements made for shipping when your mine starts?—That would be more within the knowledge of the secretary. I believe some arrangements have been made with Melbourne.

1074. Have you any knowledge of the co-operative system of coal-mining, where there is a partial sharing of the profits by the miners?—No. I have known it in the Old Country, but I believe it has never been a success.

1075. Can you say why?—No, I cannot.

1076. Have you any individual knowledge of the operation of strikes? Are there any strikes in Springfield?—I have had no experience of strikes in the colony. I have at Home.

1077. Is there anything you could state to us bearing on the present strike?—I think I could, and I believe what I am telling you is correct. I think the present trouble is due to having too many men engaged in the mines. What I mean by that is that, when the men are working only three days per week, the men become dissatisfied ; they expect to make as much in those three days as if they had worked six days. I think the remedy would be for the mine to be worked regularly by providing staiths. There are a good number of these men in the neighbourhood who are good practical miners, and the surplus men about the place help to pull down their wages.

1078. Is it not that the inferior men are rated up to the standard of the best men?—That is what I intended to convey. They do not give such a chance to the good men. If the men make more than 15s. a day they have to pay it back again to the union. There is, therefore, no inducement to these practical men to work properly. They are to make all alike when they enter the union.

1079. When you say if they get more than 15s. they hand it over to the union, do you know what the union does with the excess?—I do not know, but it is not often got, I can assure you, under the circumstances. I think the only cure for this short-time working by the men would be storage at the mines, and only sufficient hands to be kept on to give them regular employment. They keep so many now, so as to enable them to rush a boat out as quickly as possible.

1080. Suppose you were to put out 500 tons a day, and were blocked for over a week for want of shipping?—Then, of course, we would be at a standstill, though I do not think there are many days in the week on which the bar is blocked. I have known them at the Wallsend, when I have been over there, working only two or three days a fortnight.

1081. Have you been down the Wallsend Mine? Can you give us any idea of the nature of the coal?—It seemed to be of good quality.

1082. Is it mixed with stone?—There was stone in some of it. Yes.

1083. Was that general, or was it confined to near the fault?—I should think it was pretty general, because there seemed to be a good stack of stone around the mine, which had evidently been thrown out.

1084. Did you see similar stone in the Coal-pit Heath?—I did not look for it. I was not reporting on the place.

1085. Would you expect that if the Wallsend Mine is in the same seam as the Coal-pit Heath there would be a great difference?—Not in a short horizontal distance like that. I do not think it would make much difference ; but it seems very difficult to account for these things. At any rate, I should expect it.

1086. Do you know the Tyneside coal?—I have seen it, and I do not think there is much difference.

1087. Is there any stone in it?—I do not think there is much stone in it.

1088. What, in your opinion, should be the proportionate payment for pillar-working as compared with the whole coal, say, in the Brunner Mine? How much can a man do at pillar-work as against solid-coal work?—I suppose he would do quite double the quantity on pillar-coal.

1089. So that, if he were paid in both cases upon the whole coal put out, he would make twice the rate of wages at the pillar-work?—He would, at the present scale of 2s. 10d. per ton all round. But, then, on the other hand, the coal in the pillars is crushed very much.

1090. I mean in screened coal : what allowance would have to be made?—I could hardly tell that. In pillar-work I should prefer to do all on the same system, and make some allowance for slack.

1091. Have you any knowledge of the present method of working followed in the Brunner?—No.

1092. Have you worked pillars by day-labour?—No. We paid by contract, but then we paid for slack at the rate of 1s. 6d. per ton and 4s. for whole coal—that would come to about 3s. 4½d. for gross.

1093. And the men, at that rate, make good wages?—Yes. Some of them make £1 a day ; on the other hand, there are some of them making 10s. a day on exactly the same conditions, and they are perfectly satisfied ; that is due to the quality of the men.

1094. What is the thickness of the seam they are working?—Four feet.

1095. Is the coal hard?—Yes. We are not getting out of the solid now, it is the pillars we are working.