

3201. Is there any tendency in the roof and the overlying rock to form gaping cracks?—I have not seen any gaping cracks.
3202. Is the crush on the timbers pretty straight when the pillars are drawn?—Fairly well.
3203. How do they lie when they are crushed?—The weight of the stone will break your timber, or else it will crush it down into the bottom. In many cases the timber is crushed into the bottom.
3204. Is there any sheer in the timber, as if it did not settle straight, but sliding?—It depends how the timber is set. If it is set true to its work it would not do that. It will break first if the timber is set true.
3205. Have you been through the old workings on this side of the Brunner fault?—Yes, partly.
3206. Now [pointing, on plan] what state is that part of the mine in?—I could hardly tell now.
3207. There has been no work done there for many years?—No.
3208. Were you working in it ever?—No; the top end of the old working was going on when I came here.
3209. Were any pillars drawn in the old workings?—Some pillars were taken out; they were split pillars chiefly.
3210. What is the greatest height in any of the old workings?—About 15ft.
3211. And where were these pillars split—anywhere near the fault?—Well, yes, next to the stone drift. In some places the roof fell, but mostly it was bodily crushed.
3212. That part of the mine has settled down?—That part of the mine has perfectly settled down.
3213. And have any pillars been taken out near the river that you are aware of?—Not that I am aware of.
3214. Could they have been taken out without your knowing it?—Not in my time.
3215. Do you know anything about the Coal-pit Heath Mine?—No, I have not been in the Coal-pit Heath for ten years, I suppose.
3216. Then, I understand, it is not until the workings advance on a pillar that the coal begins to crush?—Yes.
3217. Is it as good as bord coal?—Just the same.
3218. Could that crush not be avoided to any extent?—You could not avoid it. It is an impossibility.
3219. You are obliged to let them crush as you begin working?—Yes, and there is nothing can prevent it.
3220. Do you think that this tendency to crush would increase as time goes on, and be worse to deal with?—I do not think it would.
3221. Do you think it was a mistake not to have taken out the pillars formerly?—To a certain extent it would have been better to have taken them out formerly, because less expense would have been incurred in making the banks right again. It takes a considerable amount of money to get the roads made up.
3222. Do you think it possible that it can affect the safety of the deeper parts of the mine when they come to be worked?—Not in the slightest.
3223. Do you know anything of the cracks that go through the surface?—I have not been on the range. I have heard Armstrong say there are cracks, and that surface-water gets in.
3224. Is there any special danger in the Brunner Mine in working these pillar-workings?—No more than in ordinary coal-mines.
3225. Have you ever had an accident from falls?—No.
3226. When new men are taken into the mine, what are they set to do first?—New miners?
3227. Yes?—Perhaps lower some pillars. But as it is now, if new men come they would have to go into the face to work.
3228. There are two men in each place at the face?—Yes.
3229. You have to do with the arranging of them?—I should be there to direct them to the place, and should let a deputy go with one pair, and I should go with another pair. We should see these pairs into the face, and I should go round all the workings until I had all my men in their places.
3230. In doing so, would you explain to them any special thing?—I should draw their attention to the roof first, and caution them as to the danger of the stone, and as to the main point of putting the timber in right. I should have to go over the works two or three times during the shift to see that the timber was put in correctly.
3231. And with these precautions, do you think that there would be no extra danger to fresh men?—I do not think there would.
3232. Provided they were coal-miners?—If they were coal-miners there would be no special danger.
3233. Would there be any special danger to quartz-miners?—I do not think there would.
3234. Have you ever worked at quartz?—No, but I know that, as a rule, quartz-miners are more up to timbering than the coal-miners.
3235. Do any of the pillars work out pretty solid?—We do not take them all out.
3236. I was going to ask you about the proportion of solid to slack in the pillars. Do some work out more solid coal than others?—Yes.
3237. What do the most solid ones work out? Take a skip of the best pillars, would it give as much solid coal as if it were bord coal?—Yes, just the same.
3238. And the most crushed pillars, what would they give?—Perhaps about 5cwt.
3239. To the skip?—Yes.