

3417. The danger is that the coal might fall upon him with greater suddenness than as if he were working in the solid?—And the rock also.

3418. You mentioned one accident that occurred in this pillar-working of the dip: how did that arise?—The coal came over the sprag.

3419. And that is the only accident that occurred?—Yes.

3420. Experience has not shown that there have been more accidents during the pillar-workings than during the solid?—No.

3421. And on the whole the mine has been remarkably free from accident considering the time it has been working and the number of men employed?—Yes.

3422. Is it possible for a deputy to instruct new hands sufficiently for them to work in safety with an old hand?—Yes, with an old hand; he might keep him right.

3423. If they were working alone, would it be safe?—For new hands?

3424. Yes. Would it be safe for two new hands to be in a place?—I do not think it would be safe.

3425. Even if they were experienced quartz-miners?—Quartz is different altogether to coal.

3426. Do you think a quartz-miner's experience is of no use in coal-mining?—It is not the same as a coal-miner's experience, as where there is rock and the position low there is not so much danger of the material falling upon a man as in a coalfield where it is 17ft. high: there it is dangerous.

3427. *Mr. Brown.*] Have you any knowledge of the system under which the skips are put into the mine?—No.

3428. *The Chairman.*] You have nothing to do with them?—No, I have nothing to do with them.

3429. *Mr. Brown.*] Do you know how it is arranged?—It is not my branch at all, and I never interfere in it.

3430. *Mr. Moody.*] You have nothing to do with the Wallsend, I suppose?—No. I have been solely occupied in the Brunner Mine the whole of my time here.

3431. Do you know the drive that is being put to the dip coal beyond the fault?—No, I have not been there.

3432. Is not that part of your duty?—Not at that time, when they are driving down. It was only one place.

3433. And who looked after that?—There was one man told off to lay the road and look after it for the two men.

3434. Are you in the accident fund?—Yes.

3435. Has there been some attempt lately to withdraw money from it?—I have heard that there has been, but I could not tell if it is a fact or not. It was being brought before a meeting lately.

3436. The miners wish it to be withdrawn. I do not know if it is a general desire. A few wish it, it seems.

3437. But they are not able to withdraw it?—I do not think they will be able to do it. It is a case of desperation, they want to break everything up, and make every one the same.

3438. What do you pay into the fund?—One shilling a fortnight.

3439. What do you get out?—A pound a week.

3440. During the time you may be laid up?—Yes; in the case of an accident.

3441. For the whole of the time?—Yes. I think they have been paid £1 5s. a week lately.

3442. *The Chairman.*] As you understand the accident fund, do you think it would be a fair thing to have it broken up, and divided among the men?—I could not say that.

3443. How long have you subscribed to it?—A good many years. From soon after the commencement of it.

3444. Was that in the early days?—I was insured formerly in a Greymouth office.

3445. You are not insured in the office in Greymouth now?—No.

3446. Then of course all you have accumulated to the fund remains in it?—Yes.

3447. *Mr. Moody.*] Have you any idea of the amount deposited in it?—I have heard that there is somewhere near £700 in it at the present time, but whether that is correct or not I could not say.

3448. You are not a member of the committee of management?—No.

3449. *The Chairman.*] Are you a member of the union?—No.

3450. You had a union of deputies, I think; is that still in existence?—I have left it.

3451. Why was that?—It was at the time of the bother. There was a manager's rule that they should do all the repairs in the mine, and they said it was not right to do it, and so I left them.

3452. You thought it was right to do all the repairs?—Yes.

3453. *Mr. Brown.*] Was that a local or colonial union?—It was here, and limited to the three mines, the Brunner, Coal-pit Heath, and Wallsend.

3454. *The Chairman.*] Do you know the feeling among the daily-wage men about this strike? Are they anxious to keep it up?—It seems so with a good few.

3455. They have nothing to gain by it, have they?—No.

3456. And yet they want to keep it up?—Yes. Just a few of the leaders agitate the thing. They know their case is hopeless, and they want to make every one the same, I think.

3457. *Mr. Brown.*] What do you mean by that?—They want every one to be punished alike. They know their case is bad, and they want everybody to be bad alike. I think that is about it.

3458. Have you in your inspection of the mine seen the miners taking idle day underground?—No.

3459. They are always at work?—Yes.

3460. What number of hours per day do you think the miners work?—Eight hours.