

3539. Was that at the time there was a limitation imposed by the union as to what the men should earn?—It was before, and at the time too; it extended to both times. There is one thing I might point out: Towards the close at Wallsend a large percentage of the places turned out to be good working-places.

3540. What part of the mine was that?—This was in the eastward working. In those places that commenced to work well they got a larger advantage by the gross weight than the ordinary places would do; and, to answer that question you put a short time since, those men's earnings began to be so much, that the union had to, or at least they did, put on a restriction.

3541. What was the object in putting on a restriction?—Well, in my opinion, it was to prevent the public seeing that they earned so much money.

3542. Did the miners try to evade that restriction in any way?—Yes, it has been evaded. It has been both evaded and attempted without succeeding.

3543. How did they attempt to evade it?—By asking me to get them two tickets made out, one to show the union, and another to keep away from the union.

3544. Were the union authorities aware that this was going on at the time?—I do not think they were.

3545. You say they evaded it. You have just stated how they attempted to evade it, but you could have prevented that when they applied?—It was in my power to prevent it; but they had money to receive in various ways. Sometimes a man might have so much for measurement and so much per ton for his coals on those measurements; and on other days a man might have so much to go in from the company for doing day-work—timbering, or anything of that sort. This measure went into my book, and the day-work and timbering also went into my book; and they could get separate tickets made out by the clerk—one for the other work, to keep it away from the union, and one for the coal to present to the union.

3546. That is how they did actually evade it?—Yes.

3547. *Mr. Brown.*] Was the limit 15s.?—I have heard it stated to be 15s., and from 15s. to 16s., but not more than 16s.

3548. *The Chairman.*] Did that restriction cause the men to idle their time?—In some instances. Men who used to have extraordinary good places would idle their time away when they had earned the amount of money to which they were restricted.

3549. And during that time the running expenses of the mine were going on?—Yes, just the same.

3550. So that the owners were not getting the advantage of the good places in their mine?—Just so.

3551. Being familiar with the Wallsend Mine, do you think it might be said to have been worked out, or worked to such a degree that it became necessary to close it?—My impression is that it could be worked for years to come.

3552. Can you explain more about that?—Providing there was a market for the coal; that, I think, would be the only drawback to the Wallsend being worked.

3553. *Mr. Moody.*] Was 12ft. the usual thickness of the coal?—Sixteen feet would be called the usual thickness.

3554. *The Chairman.*] What would be the loss from stone?—It would require a minute calculation to answer that.

3555. But, roughly speaking. Where was the stone separated, in the mine or the screen?—It was taken in the screen. The men would not pick an ounce out.

3556. You could form an idea, then. How was it separated?—The coal broke from it in the screens, and the stone was thrown away; but a good deal of it went into the market, I believe.

3557. That would account for the bad market-value of the coal?—It would help in a measure.

3558. Would it not be possible by some measure of water-screening to separate it?—It would not make any difference to that; it would have to be broken up with picks; but there was so much stone among it that all the coal would have to be broken up into very small coal to get it clear of the stone.

3559. The men were paid on the stone as well as the coal?—No, they were not. Allow me to explain. Under the "Billy Play-fair" system the stone was all picked out before the stuff was weighed; the same practice was carried out in the rough system. The coal was broken up and the stone taken out, and an average reduction made for the stone, the weight of the stone being reduced from the truck.

3560. That would give an idea of how much stone was in the coal?—I never made it my business to pay any special attention to that; but there is a very large quantity of stone in this coal, especially the bottom portion. As much as is practicable is left in the mine and not worked at all on account of this.

3561. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, if there could be a market for the coal, you have plenty more coal there to work?—Yes, a very large area could be worked if there was a market for it.

3562. *Mr. Moody.*] What about the coal through the fault? We have evidence that the coal was very much better through the roll?—For the first 15 yards there was no change. Then we came upon about perhaps 12 yards of very nice bright coal, with good facings, fracture good, and everything good.

3563. Was it stony?—There was a percentage of stone, but less than in other parts of the mine. That was to the fault.

3564. And the fault cut it off?—Yes.

3565. Do you think the manner in which the stone occurs in that coal is such as to lead you to expect that a change in the quality of the coal right over the field will take place to the dip in all parts, or is it anything peculiar owing to a change having been worked in the nature of the coal by