

33. In the first place, what do you pay for hewing alone?—There are two rates: 2s. 4d. a ton for solid workings—that is, the first time of working; or bords, 2s. 4d. a ton.

34. That is what they call putting in a drive?—Yes.

35. Do you pay them any yardage?—We pay different prices. They vary from 6s. to 9s., according to the width.

36. For the benefit of the Committee, you might say why you pay this higher rate in solid workings, and what is meant by your drive?—A bord is 6 yards square, and turned away every 22 yards, leaving pillars 16 yards square. The bords are just 6 yards wide, and on that 6 yards is based the tonnage-rates. I may say in driving a bord you might have the same amount of work as you had in a 9 ft. place. To compensate for the same amount of work for less coal coming out of the smaller place we pay a yardage-rate to equalise those working in the bords.

37. What is the ordinary rate you pay your men?—We work at per day, and according to the bord.

38. What is the ordinary rate you pay in ordinary places?—We pay 2s. 4d. per ton.

39. In solid workings?—Yes.

40. That is simply in connection with the opening-up?—Yes.

41. I want to know the rate you pay for getting out the pillars?—We pay 1s. 9d. up to 2s. per ton. I may say we have an industrial agreement, but in these pillars, with their exceptional circumstances, we make allowances.

42. Do you pay by weight?—Yes.

43. The usual miner's allowance, 22½ to the ton?—No; we pay on 20 cwt. to the ton.

44. Do you work the "Billy fair-play"?—No; it is weighed running over an ordinary weighing-machine with a tell-face on it that registers the weight. Mr. Foster is the check-weighman, and then there is our own man.

45. Is the coal screened at the face, or is it taken away?—Just as it comes, coal and slack.

46. In pillar coal you pay from 1s. 9d. to 2s.?—Yes.

47. In solid workings what price do you pay?—2s. 4d.

48. How many men do you employ in the particular part of the mine under your charge?—About 350.

49. Hewers?—No; we have about ninety-three hewers.

50. Turning out coal?—Yes

51. You have 350 men employed altogether?—Yes.

52. Could you give the Committee an idea of how the balance of these men are employed?—I can give you a rough idea. I may say that there are fifty-six men and boys employed on the pick-machines, which makes a rough total of 150 hewers.

53. How do you employ the other 200 men?—We have fourteen deputies and shot-firers and seven blasters.

54. You utilise these men at some other work?—Yes; the deputies help to timber, &c., and look after the safety of the men. Then we have six men brushing—that is, doing up the roads and keeping them in repair. We have a couple of mine-managers, one in charge of each of the sections; forty-three men and boys trucking—that is, pushing the tubs up and down; twenty men and boys employed on the rope-road and haulage. I may say we have about twelve miles of rope-road haulage at Denniston. Then we have thirteen men and boys employed about the tipplers. Then twenty-eight men and boys are engaged screening and loading and lowering coal on the incline.

55. Is not that a large number of hands employed for the number of miners?—It is a big output. There are about 200 outside the miners. Then we have men repairing tubs, sixteen engineers and fitters; there are nine employed in the blacksmith's shop, six carpenters, five stone-masons, and eleven general labourers. There are four on the office staff. A total of about 350.

56. Could you give us an idea of the cost of management per ton? A large number of these men who will be paid daily or weekly, a set charge. Can you give the Committee any idea of what the cost is per ton of every ton of coal leaving the mine?—I could not; they keep all that information in Dunedin.

57. But have you never formed an opinion of what the cost per ton would be?—If I gave you anything, it would be only a rough estimate.

58. The position is this: this Committee is set up to inquire into the coal question, and I am trying to find out the cost of the coal from the moment it is leased from the Government and the price you pay to the miner, and I want to trace it up to the consumer to see whether there is any leakage, in order that we may be able, if necessary, to report to the House that in certain directions the management expenses could be reduced. I am anxious to know, therefore, what you consider the cost of management is per ton: the whole cost of management, including yourself, the underviewers, including all the extra men, labourers, firemen, boys, and everything?—I could not give that information.

59. You mentioned a few moments ago about machines: you have a number employed?—Yes.

60. You have had a considerable experience as a practical miner?—Yes.

61. Before reaching the position you have got?—Yes; I have been brought up to it from my youth.

62. Can you give us any idea whether these machines are likely to produce as much round coal as the miner?—I think they will produce more. I may say, with regard to these machines, that we have them because we can work a section out quicker. We can concentrate our work better, and it gives us a bigger output.

63. Does it give more round coal than the miner?—Yes.

64. They must have improved very much?—They have gone into the thing very deeply since. In the early days they were not a success.