

141. At what end of the mine did you propose to sink the shaft—the north or the south?—It was immaterial which end, the depth would be the same.

142. When you estimated the damage, you surely fixed in your mind's eye what would be the cost of sinking a shaft, its position, and what would be the cost to put it into fair working order? How did you arrive at it? Did you fix any point at all?—It would be the same at the north end as the south end. The distance of the coal would be the same, and the measures would be the same.

143. You did not decide which end you would put in a drive: you estimated roughly that it would require to be sunk 500ft. or 600ft.?—Yes.

144. Would the driving be the same at either end?—Yes.

145. What did you estimate the cost of driving?—£3,000.

146. The sinking of the shafts and timbering them before you reached the seam would cost?—About £12,000; two shafts of 1,200 feet of sinking.

147. Would not a shaft of 270ft. reach it?—No.

148. What is the depth of the present shaft?—270 feet.

149. How do you come to double it?—We should have to sink down to catch the coal-seam at a lower level.

150. Would not the seam be the same?—Yes; but the working could not be done in the same way.

151. Would you explain how it could not be got at?—I should have to go into a lot of technical explanations. This was for the better working of the mine. It would cost as much to put down a shaft of 270ft. and drive in upon it as it would a shaft of 600ft. The other way you would have heavier expenses in pumping, as you would have to lift the water up an incline.

152. Could you not sink at the same depth you have done now, and open up? How are you working by your present shaft?—I am only working to the rise from the present shaft. The coal comes down to the shaft; but my submarine workings have to go down to the dip for the coal.

153. But you could reach coal at less sinking—at 270ft. on the rise?—Yes; but that would not open up coal. The coal lies to the dip, and the reason for deeper shafts is to avoid the flooded submarine area.

154. It would enable you to get at the coal in the way you were doing?—Yes; but we could not open up any quantity of coal.

155. Is your present shaft, 270ft., not to the rise?—That is, to the lower seam.

156. You estimate that in no case could you possibly get at the coal without sinking 500ft. or 600ft.?—No.

157. And that, you say, would cost £12,000?—Yes.

158. But you could get coal at a much less depth of sinking?—I could not get coal that I could work.

159. Why could you not get coal at a less depth?—Because we should have to go outside this large area, which is flooded.

160. Did that £12,000 include machinery?—The machinery would have to be shifted.

161. You took into consideration the machinery in that £12,000?—Yes.

162. You are part owner of the mine?—Yes.

163. What does the company consist of: how many shareholders are in it?—Two.

164. Mr. Rich and yourself?—Yes.

165. The reason I ask you is, because you used an expression in another part of your evidence—"the public to whom the mine belongs"—who holds the lease that you are working?—The company.

166. From the Government?—No.

167. Who holds the original lease of the land?—Mr. Hutchison.

168. Do you know what amount he pays?—£20 a year.

169. And the company pay Hutchison how much?—£350 per annum.

170. Is that still going on?—Yes.

171. Have you taken any steps to relieve yourself of the burden of that lease—have you communicated with Mr. Hutchison?—No.

172. How long have you got to run?—Fourteen or fifteen years.

173. What do you consider the value of that lease?—Nothing, unless money can be got to work it.

174. You have still got a liability standing of fifteen years at £350 a year, and you have taken no steps to get rid of it?—If we gave it up we should have to give up all we spent on it.

175. You have no desire to relinquish the lease to the original lessor, Hutchison?—No.

176. Have you made any arrangement for reopening the mine yourself?—No.

177. Not the slightest?—No.

178. Is there any one in charge of the mine, looking after the property?—Yes; the underground manager, Mr. Kenyon.

179. What salary is he drawing?—Nine shillings a day.

180. Did you not sink a shaft in April in a different part to your present shaft—to the north?—No; I opened up an old shaft.

181. What was your object in opening that up?—To prove the seam that had been cut in the shaft.

182. Did you succeed in proving it?—In proving it was unworkable.

183. Have you made ~~any~~ arrangements about carrying on the company?—There are no arrangements made up to the present.

184. Have you made any negotiations at all for carrying on the company, either for forming a new company, or carrying on the present company?—There are no negotiations for carrying on the company, or for starting a new company.

185. For carrying on operations?—No.