

25. What are the men able to make per diem?—Their average when running fair, with no stoppage, is about 9s. a day.

26. How many days do they average a fortnight?—From seven to eight in the summer time.

27. How do you account for that small number of days?—Slackness of trade.

28. What do they work in the winter time?—They might average eight days through the year. Sometimes, for a couple of months, there is not an idle day, and at other times there might be ten or eleven idle days in a month. But you might call it practically full time during the winter months.

29. Do the men get any concessions in the way of dwellings?—No, they cannot buy a bit of land to put a house on unless they pay an extortionate price for it.

30. The men live in the cottages along the banks of the river?—Yes.

31. To whom do the cottages belong?—To the company.

32. What rent do they pay for them?—5s. a week for four small rooms, and 3s. a week for two or three rooms.

33. How much space do they get for a garden?—A quarter of an acre to each cottage.

34. *Mr. Lomas.*] What distance are the stentons apart?—They are no regular distance apart. I have seen them 60 yards.

35. What is the general run?—They have no general run.

36. Suppose they were working a bord heading, what would be the distance there?—They do not drive more than the one heading. They make the first stenton in the bord act as back-heading. I have seen them go 70 yards without turning a bord.

37. Suppose they broke a bord away at the face?—I have several times seen them break a bord away and miss one, and then seen them bring the stenton back again.

38. They start three or four bords all at once?—Yes.

39. How far do you drive the bords up before putting a stenton through?—About 7 yards. The general thing is that perhaps it will go the length of two bords. It is about 24 yards: 7 yards of a pillar, and a bord equal to 12 yards; two bords equal to 24 yards.

40. How far do they drive a bord up before putting a stenton through to the next bord?—From 9 to 10 yards.

41. And 7 yards back?—Yes.

42. And that is 40 yards before getting a stenton through?—Yes.

43. And, in the meantime, you are driving the heading all the time?—Yes.

44. Is it a practice now to drive these stentons wide?—No; the present manager agrees to them going narrow. He does not seem to view with favour the wide stentons.

45. In the event of driving them wide, do they put them through narrow before going to the next bord?—It has been done when going through a pillar twice its ordinary size.

46. You said something about not bratticing; do you think the brattice would be of any service with the present method of ventilating the mine?—Yes.

47. Would it interfere with the ventilation?—They would want more pressure if they used more bratticing.

48. Have you been through the return air-courses at all in any of the mines?—Yes, at Kimihia.

49. Are they clean, and is there no obstruction?—They are not so very bad. It is over two years and a half since I was through.

50. Were they fairly large?—6 ft. by 6 ft., but there were lots of steam-pipes in.

51. Are they as large as the intake?—No.

52. Are they in the habit of putting overcasts in to separate the mine?—They used to do so in Kimihia years ago, but since going down to the present levels they do not seem to have done so.

53. Is the air divided at all in the Kimihia Mine?—I do not know from examining it myself.

54. In that case the men in the top heading would get the best air, and the others the worst?—Yes.

55. Are there separate travelling-roads from the main incline for the men?—No, they travel the incline.

56. Do they travel that when the rope is going?—No, it is prohibited by the manager.

57. Do you consider the mines are safe?—Generally speaking, I think they are as safe as you can expect, but at the same time I think there ought to be some means of escape instead of going up the main road in the event of any trouble. The unexpected does happen sometimes.

58. Would it be difficult to get up the return air-course on account of the steam-pipes being there?—Yes.

59. Apart from the heat, do they interfere with the traffic?—Yes, they are not exactly against the side.

60. What do they rest on?—Mostly on short rails stuck in the sides in drilled holes.

61. Have you ever known anything to give way in the roof in a mine which would indicate any danger?—It has a fireclay roof, and it is liable to run or fret if the coal is exposed, and if any coal falls it has to be filled up again. They pack it with clay.

62. What thickness is the fireclay on the top, generally?—I was in a place where it fell at one time, and was working along with another man about three weeks at it. I dare say it would be 6 ft. or 7 ft. thick, and there would be a bastard sandstone above it.

63. Is there any quicksand here?—There is quicksand all about the Huntly district.

64. Suppose anything were to break through, do you think it would be possible for the men to escape?—At the present I do not.

65. Not at all?—No.

66. Do the men truck their coal from the face?—No. All the coal is brought by truckers.

67. *Mr. Proud.*] Can workers find their way out by the return airways?—I do not think one