

The influenza epidemic stopping the output of coal and paralysing the shipping finally precipitated the crisis.

The late General Manager, Mr. Hiley, relinquished office on 30th April, 1919. It is right to state that a perusal of the correspondence shows that the matter of coal-supplies was not dealt with by the present General Manager.

10. *Whether the Department was brought under the jurisdiction of the Coal Trade Committees or other authorities under the Coal Trade Regulations and rationed in the same way as other industries, and, if so, whether the Department regularly kept such Committees or authorities apprised of its requirements.*

The control of railway coal-supplies was brought under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Munitions by a war regulation of 28th August, 1917, and the necessary machinery was put into operation on 4th October, 1917, from which date all consumers, including the railways, were rationed by the Minister of Munitions. The Railway Department kept the proper authorities apprised of its requirements.

11. *Whether the Department used its organization in co-operation with such Committees or authorities for the purpose of obtaining coal and maintaining stocks for railway purposes.*

The Railway Department co-operated with the Coal Trade Board to obtain stocks for railway purposes.

12. *Whether all the coal obtained for and allocated to the Railway Department under the Coal Trade Regulations was delivered to the Department, and whether and to what extent coal allocated for railway purposes was diverted to other industries.*

Coal obtained for the railways and afterwards allocated to the Railway Department by the Minister of Munitions was sometimes diverted by him to other purposes under urgent circumstances. The necessity for final allocation could not always be foreseen. As far as we can ascertain about 6,000 tons were diverted between May, 1918, and 2nd July, 1919.

13. *Whether the diversion of coal from the railways to other industries detrimentally affected the position of the railway coal reserves.*

Diversion of coal from the railways lessened the quantity of the railway supplies to the extent mentioned in the answer to the preceding question.

14. *Whether the Railway Department kept closely in touch with overseas coal-supplies with a view to supplementing supplies obtained through the Coal Trade Committees.*

The Railway Department kept closely in touch with overseas coal-suppliers. The railway coal-supplies were not obtained through the Advisory Committee, but were ordered by the Railway Department and allocated by the Minister of Munitions and his officers.

15. *Whether the staff of the Department was of sufficient strength on the 2nd July, 1919, to have enabled the ordinary time-table in operation on that date to be maintained had other conditions been satisfactory.*

The staff on the 2nd July, 1919, was sufficient to have continued the ordinary time-table had there been sufficient coal-supplies available.

16. *Whether the restrictions imposed on the carriage of passengers and goods were essential.*

The restrictions imposed on the carriage of passengers and goods were essential.

17. *Whether the curtailment made in the train services was due to causes other than shortage of coal.*

There was no other reason for the curtailment made in the train services but the shortage of coal.

All which we respectfully submit.

We have the honour to be, Your Excellency's obedient servants,

J. P. MAXWELL, M.Inst.C.E.

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W. D. HUNT.

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