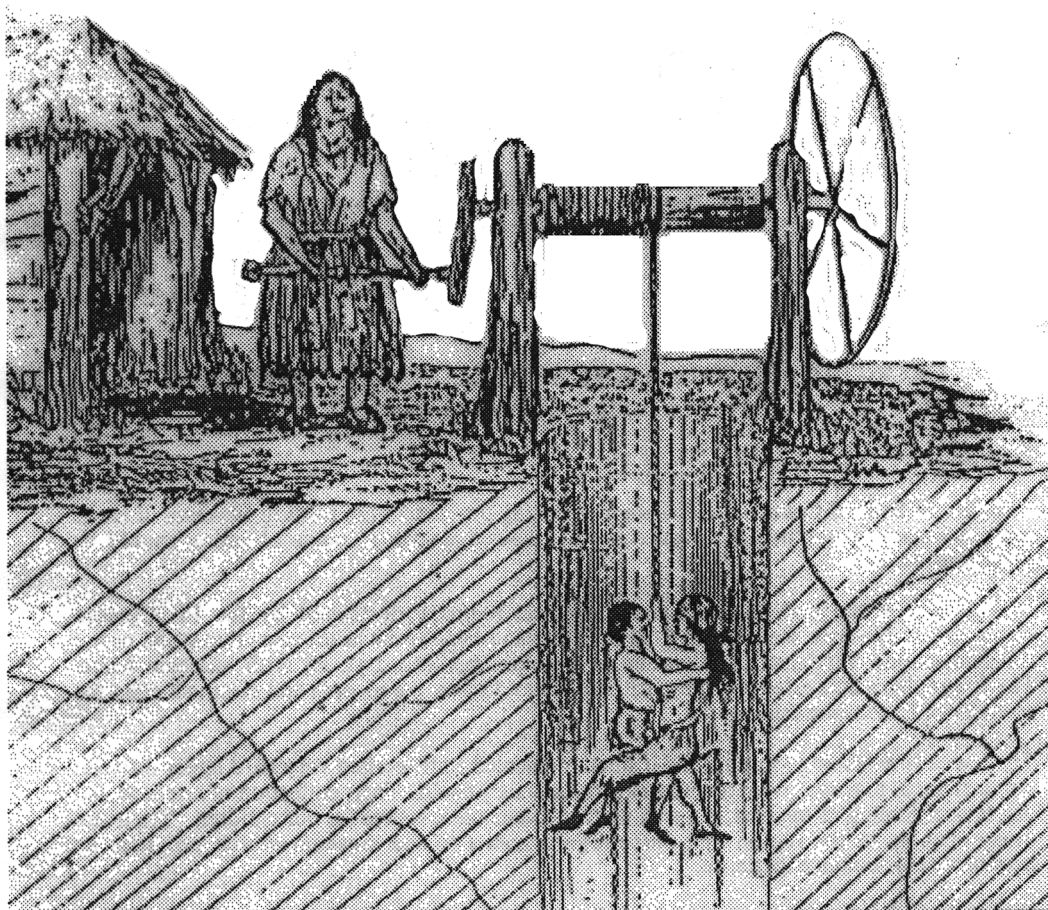


CHILDREN'S EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION

REPORT by JELINGER C. SYMONS, ESQ., on the Employment of Children and Young Persons in the Mines of the Cumberland Coal-Field; and on the State, Condition, and Treatment of such Children and Young Persons.



Edited by Ian Winstanley

**The Evidence
Cumberland Coalfield**

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COMMISSION

(UNDER THE GREAT SEAL)

FOR INQUIRING INTO THE EMPLOYMENT AND CONDITION OF CHILDREN IN MINES AND MANUFACTORIES.

VICTORIA, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Queen, Defender of the Faith: To Our trusty and well beloved Thomas Tooke, Esquire, Thomas Southwood Smith, Esquire, Doctor in Medicine, together with Leonard Horner and Robert John Saunders, Esquires, two of Our Inspectors of Factories, Greeting:- WHEREAS, an humble Address was presented unto to Us by Knights, Citizens and Burgesses and Commissioners of Shires and Burghs in Parliament assembled, humbly beseeching Us that We should be graciously pleased to direct an Inquiry to be made into the Employment of the Children of the Poorer Classes in Mines and Collieries and the various branches of Trade and Manufactures in which numbers of Children work together, not being included in the provisions of the Acts for regulating Employment of Children and Young Persons in Mills and Factories and to collect information as to the time allowed each day for meals and as to the actual state, condition and treatment of such Children and as to the effects of such Employment, both with regard to their morals and their bodily health; NOW KNOW YE, THAT WE, reposing great trust and confidence in your ability and discretion, have nominated, constituted and appointed and do by these presentiments nominate, constitute and appoint you the said, Thomas Tooke, Thomas Southwood Smith, together with, Leonard Horner and Robert John Saunders, to be Our Commissioners for the purposes aforesaid and We do hereby enjoin you to obey all directions touching the premises which shall from time to time be given you, and any two or more of you, by one of our principle Secretaries of State and for the better discovery of the truth in the premises, we do, by these presentiments, give and grant to you, or any two or more of you, full power and authority to call before you such persons as you will judge necessary, by whom you may be the better informed of the truth in the premises, and to inquire of the premises and every part thereof, by all other lawful way and means whatsoever and We do hereby also give and grant unto you, or any two or more of you, full power and authority when the same shall appear to be requisite, to administer an oath or oaths to any person or persons whatsoever, to be examined before you, or two or more of you, touching or concerning the premises and Our further will and pleasure is, that you Our said Commissioners, or any three of you, do, with as little delay as may be consistent with a due discharge of the duties hereby imposed upon you, Certify to Us, under your hands and seals, or under the hands and seals of any three of you, your several proceedings in the premises; And We further will and command, and by these presents ordained, that this Our Commission shall continue in full force and virtue, and that you, Our said Commissioners, or any two or more of you, shall and may from time to time proceed in the execution thereof, and of every matter and thing therein contained, although the same be not continued, from time to time by adjournment: AND WE HEREBY COMMAND all and singular Our Justices of the Peace, Sheriffs, Mayors, Bailiffs, Constables, Officers, Ministers, and all other of Our loving Subjects whatsoever, as will within Liberties as without, that they may be assistant to you and each of you in the execution of these presentiments. And for your assistance in the due execution of this Commission, We have made choice of Our trusty and well beloved Joseph Fletcher, Esquire, to be the Secretary of this Our Commission, whose services we require you to use from time to time, as occasion may require. In witness thereof, We have caused these Letters to be made Patent. Witness Ourselves at Westminster, the Twentieth day of October, in the Fourth Year of Our Reign.

By Writ of Privy
Seal,

EDMUNDS.

LETTER OF INSTRUCTIONS EXTENDING THE TERMS OF THE COMMISSION TO “YOUNG PERSONS”

Whitehall, February 11th, 1841.

GENTLEMEN,

THE QUEEN having been pleased to comply with the prayer of an humble Address presented to Her Majesty, in pursuance of a Resolution of the House of Commons, dated 4th. of February, 1841, ‘That Her Majesty will be graciously pleased to direct that the Commission appointees in answer to an Address of this House, on August 4, 1840, for the investigation of certain branches of Infant Labour, do include within its inquiry the Labour also of Young Persons designated as such by the provisions of the Factory Act’ I am delighted by the Marquis of Normanby to desire that you will include within your inquiry the Labour of Young Persons designated as such by the provisions of the Factory Act accordingly.

I am, Gentlemen,
Your Obedient Servant,
(Signed) F. MAULE.

*The Commissioners for inquiring into the Condition
of Children employed in Mines, &c.*

FOREWORD

When Jelinger C.Symons Esq travelled to West Cumbria in 1841 on behalf of the Children's Employment Commission, the evidence he collected on the conditions of employment in the local coal mines, would shock even the most hardened aid-worker fighting to outlaw child labour in foreign countries today.

The evidence was so offensive, even to the Victorian public, that legislation was quickly introduced to outlaw the employment of women and girls underground and boys under the age of ten.

Fortunately, nearly one hundred and sixty years later, such practices have long since vanished from the memory of local people. However, the accounts collected from children as young as seven, working at John Pit, Harrington, now provide a window back to these times and vividly portray the hardships these children endured at the hands of their masters.

Ian Winstanley, a publisher of mining related works, has previously published the evidence gathered in the Lancashire Coalfields and has now turned his attention to the Cumberland reports. To assist the modern reader, a small amount of editing was necessary.

Haig Colliery Mining Museum is pleased to be associated with this publication. The main aim of the museum is to ensure that the history of coal mining is not forgotten in West Cumbria, even though the industry is now a thing of the past.

John Greasley
Secretary
Haig Pit Restoration Group

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CHILDRENS EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION

REPORT by JELINGER C. SYMONS, ESQ., on the Employment of Children and Young Persons in the Mines of the Cumberland Coal-Field; and on the the, State, Condition, and Treatment of such Children and Young Persons.

TO HER MAJESTY'S COMMISSIONERS.

GENTLEMEN,

London, August 12, 1841.

The fortnight allotted to me for a rapid investigation of the Cumberland Collieries has enabled me to report merely on the prominent features of the condition of those who are the subjects of our inquiry. I found evidence in some cases difficult to obtain, owing to the extreme fear of offending great men, on the part of timid or dependent witnesses.

Ages

The children do not begin to work in the Cumberland Collieries so early as in Yorkshire for the coal seams are all of a good thickness. In the inland collieries they are at least four or five feet thick and in the sea coast ones 8, 9, and 10 feet thick. Ten years is a common age for children to begin to work and they seldom commence before eight and a half years of age.

Numbers

I can form no correct estimate of the numbers of children who work in the Numbers. Cumberland Pits. They certainly are not so numerous, even in proportion to the men, as in Yorkshire.

This is owing chiefly to the far greater use of horses for conveying the coal the foreheads (banks) to the shaft. In all Lord Lonsdale's collieries, and in fact generally on the coast of Cumberland, no lads or children are employed in trailing, putting, or hurrying. The coal is all worked out on the Newcastle plan, which it is of course needless to describe to you and this, together with the height of the coal-seam, admits of the horses being brought up to the workings, thence drawing the corves or baskets away.

Driving Boys.

Boys and lads are consequently employed to drive the trams of baskets or corves of which several are hooked together, along the tram-ways. These journeys are greatly lengthened owing to many of the large collieries being sub-marine. In the William Pit they have 500 acres under the sea, and the distance is 2 miles and a half from the shaft to the extreme part of the workings. There is a stable also under the sea, in this immense pit, for 45 horses. The shaft is 110 fathoms.

And here I must state that a feature exists in this driving employment I have not hitherto seen and which constitutes the chief labour of the occupation. To prevent the baskets from running down hill and falling on the heels of the horses it is customary for the driver to place himself as a post between the foremost basket and the buttock of the horse. He places the left shoulder against the horse, the right foot on the rail of the tram and the right hand on the top of the basket, the left leg being generally supported by the trace.

When the train of corves is heavily laden, or the descent very steep, a pole is placed through the hind wheels of the trams, and thus it is in a measure dragged. Nevertheless the work is very toilsome, and, as will be seen by the evidence of the surgeon attending Earl Lonsdale's collieries,

accidents sometimes occur by the foot slipping off and getting struck by part of the wheel or axle. The leaning position in which they stand is not in itself, I think, injurious but the work itself strikes one as being palpably unnecessary and as objectionable preference of the human body for a mere mechanical process for which shafts might be and in some of the inland pits are, used instead. It was stated by one witness, that the use of shafts would be very awkward for the purpose of turning at the foreheads. I believe a very little management would obviate this difficulty. See Evidence of Nos.306,309,328.

Trappers.

Trappers are employed likewise in nearly all the pits and their somewhat augmented by having occasionally two or more doors to attend to and by having to alter checks, so that the trains may pass along proper roads at the dividing places.

Trailers and Hurriers

The trailers are employed chiefly in the smaller and inland collieries. They seldom however, trail or hurry further than from the foreheads to the 'stake' or terminus of the horse-road. Their work is decidedly laborious so nearly resembling the same employment in Yorkshire, that it is needless to repeat the description of the work. In some few pits the men trail themselves exclusively.

Hours

The children certainly work longer hours in Cumberland than I have found general in Yorkshire. They seem to work 12 hours habitually and in some of the inland collieries even longer. Owing to the inefficient power of the drawing-engine in one of these collieries belonging to Mr. Westray, the day's work has been extended to 14 or 15 hours but this cannot be considered other than an accidental circumstance. It is, however, by no means uncommon for pits to work 13 hours a-day without a change of hands.

Night-work.

In most of Lord Lonsdale's extensive collieries they work night and day, the shift who work the 12 day hours one week working the 12 night hours the succeeding week and so on alternately. The appearance of the adults in these collieries was remarkably pallid and emaciated. I should attribute this greatly to the system of night-working and there is a probability that the change from night to day hours operates more unfavourably on the health than it would do were they to work altogether at night. In the latter case habit becomes second nature and sleep as refreshing is obtained by day as by night. Not so when the animal system is subjected to continual change no habit is formed and according to the evidence the rest obtained in the day is very deficient; so much so, as to render the night-work irksome through the inclination for sleep. The wife generally goes to bed by day with her husband so do all the family and the door is often fastened to preserve as much quiet as possible. In some few pits eight-hour shifts are worked.

Wages.

The wages of both men and children are very good.. They vary from 1s. to 2s. for the drivers and trailers and from 18s. to 25s. for the colliers.

In one colliery (see Evidence 314) I found the wages of the adults amounted to 30s. a-week, they being at liberty to work as long as they pleased. I took pains to ascertain the effect of these high wages on their comforts and conduct. I found that they were no better off than those in other places who earned from 20s. to 25s. They drink and live more luxuriously for perhaps two days and are often ill off for the rest of the week. I need hardly add that they are fearfully ignorant and although, strange to say they will take lessons of an itinerant dancing-master, numbers feel no sort of shame in being ignorant of their letters, or of bringing up their children without schooling.

Accidents.

The accidents in the Whitehaven and Workington collieries were, till within the last 18 months, most numerous and fearfully fatal. They have arisen chiefly from firedamp and irruptions of the sea.

The accident which occurred in Mr. Curwen's pits near Workington about two years ago,

from an irruption of the sea, was foretold by many. It appears that the seam of coal rose under the sea, so that in working it every step brought the colliers nearer to the water. They had proceeded a considerable distance with the workings, I believe nearly two miles, in a direct line from the shore. The salt water is said to have oozed through, and some of the men had heard, or said they heard, the sound of the sea above them. So great was the apprehension, that some of the colliers left their work and others were only induced to stay by a higher amount of wages. At length the water rushed suddenly in and though some who were near enough to the entrance escaped, about 40 fell victims and remain to this hour in the pit. The sea, of course, rapidly filled it, and a black gurgling whirlpool for some time marked the aperture and the entrance of the waters at a considerable distance from the shore. The rush of air expelled by the water was so violent that it blew the hats off those who stood near. The blame was attached to Coxton, the steward who then had charge of the works. He was specially and strongly recommended to Mr. Curwen by Mr. Dunn, of Newcastle and in whom he not unnaturally placed confidence in preference to the reports which reached him from third parties. Coxton would have been torn limb from limb could he have been found by the heart-rent assemblage of the relatives of the sufferers, who thronged to the spot. There cannot be a stronger instance of the danger of trusting the management of coal-pits to subordinate and often incompetent persons than this inundation at Workington. It is right to state that the steward was immediately dismissed and that under the management of the present steward, Mr. Penrice, no accident of any of the pits has occurred worth naming for several months. See Evidence Nos. 317, 322, 31, 332, and 334.

Prior, however, to the stewardship of Mr. Penrice, another very fatal accident occurred at the John Pit, Harrington, belonging to Mr. Curwen, where 24 or 25 persons were burnt to death. At one of Lord Lonsdale's collieries, the William Pit, a similar accident, by which an equal number lost their lives occurred the year before last. On this occasion Mr. Mitchell, the surgeon accidentally hit upon carbonate of ammonia dissolved in hot water as a remedy to be applied to persons burnt. See his evidence on this point, No. 312.*

Accidents in the collieries of Lord Lonsdale on the Whingill side, out of some hundred man and boys:-

From June 1st, 1840, to June 1st, 1841, inclusive.	Haggers.	Drivers.	Trappers.
Crushed by the falling of the roof	5	..	2
" causing death	2	1	..
Burnt	11
" causing death	2
Fractures	1	3	..
* Trifling accidents	48	14	2
	69	18	4

Off work from 3 to 20 days, and only through cuts or trifling wounds so long a time as 20 days.

I feel it right to direct attention to the statement of Mr. Mitchell, (No. 312), to the effect that the coroner has in no instance required him to make post-mortem examinations of persons crushed to death by falls of roofs. Without this requirement on the part of the coroner it cannot be done and this negligence consequently deprives professional men of the information they might otherwise apply to future cases. I applied to the coroner on this point, as well as for a general statement of the accidents which had occurred.

The following is the answer of the coroner:-

"Whitehaven, Carter-lane, 5th August, 1841.

Sir,

I am sorry I cannot furnish the statement of all the fatal accidents which have come under my cognisance as coroner, arising from coal-pits, with the nature of the accident, the verdict, the date and the number of sufferers, during the last three years. All the inquisitions are sent every Quarter Sessions to the Clerk of the Peace, with whom they will be found and the cause of death endorsed on each. Post mortem

examinations can rarely be of any use in deaths occasioned by accidents in coal-pits, for in most cases the person is killed on the spot, especially when it happens, which is the case in most instances, by the roof of the pit falling on the miner. We have experienced, but not recently, dreadful loss of life by the explosion of inflammable air but most frequently no one survives to give any account of how the event occurred.

I have, &c.

(Signed) P. HODGSON.”

That post mortem examinations can rarely be of any use cases of deaths by accidents in coal-pits, is an assertion which every medical man can confute: the rareness of these examinations is, on the contrary, a most serious evil and many cases are not improbably lost for want of that better insight into the nature of internal injuries, both in cases of burns and contusions which post mortem examinations can alone supply.

A very experienced surgeon in another coal district, in the course of a conversation on burns, attributed the difficulty in curing patients to the necessity of giving stimulants to produce reaction after collapse, when the inflammation has been internal and where stimulants will themselves increase inflammation; whether the carbonate of ammonia may obviate this evil is a question of great importance. Certain it is, that persons a apparently but little burnt and who are able to walk home from the pits after the accident above a mile have subsequently died whilst under medical treatment. Medical science seems to have extended less in this department than any other. From all the evidence I have been able to gather, especially from persons who had been burnt, I should incline to the belief that the injury was internal, whilst treatment is chiefly external.

Accidents with ropes breaking are almost unheard of in Cumberland nevertheless the ropes used are no larger than in Yorkshire, tile pits double the depth and the weight drawn is quite as heavy and often heavier. This can be alone attributed to the system of drawing the baskets up bratticed shafts without any conductors at all. There is nothing to catch or jerk the ropes, to which the accidents are chiefly referable, which occur so very frequently Yorkshire.

Ventilation.

The pits are usually well ventilated, and tolerably dry; Lord Lonsdale's are especially so. Mr. W. Peile makes some remarks on the theory of ventilation and the best mode of effecting it, to which I desire to direct your attention. See Evidence, No.311.

Treatment &c.

The children are well treated, except as regards the extreme length of time they are confined to the pits. They are in appearance quite as stunted growth and present much the same physical phenomena, as those of Yorkshire, comparing, of course, those following similar branches of the work. I do not however consider the children, as a body, unhealthy.

Moral condition.

The morals of the children are very indifferent and the evidence given is a fair sample of their state of education. They are as ignorant as it is well possible to conceive children to be; nor are the lads of from 13 to 18 years old one jot more informed; but, as far as I could ascertain, less so. It is not to be supposed that children confined for 12 hours in a coal-pit can have opportunities for any sort of education. There are instances of its being previously acquired and retained and some were selected in Lord Lonsdale's colliery but this is by no means the rule and the mental and moral destitution in which the great body of the collier children are growing up in Cumberland is fearfully great.

The evidence of the child John Holmes (321) is a very fair sample of the general state of education among these benighted children. "*I don't to Sunday-school, because I don't like, and I'd rather play. I used to read the Testament. I don't know who Jesus Christ was. I never heard tell God neither. [One child said he had; for the men damned at him very often.] I am taught to say my prayers, and I say them. I don't know who I pray to?*" The education of a parrot is precisely similar and quite as beneficial to the recipient.

The employment of females in coal-pits is rapidly disappearing under the general odium it excites but very few remain and only, as far as I learned, in one old colliery of Lord Lonsdale.

I visited an iron-ore mine belonging to Messrs. Tulk and Ley, where the ore lies 25 or 30

feet in thickness and where the roads are about five feet thick. The men themselves trail and there are few children employed.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your very obedient servant,

J. C. SYMONS.

EVIDENCE COLLECTED BY JELINGER C. SYMONS, ESQ.

CUMBERLAND COAL-FIELD.

No.300 - Joseph Sharp, Under-steward to Messrs. Ross, Fletcher, and Co., at Broughton Moor Collieries, near Maryport. Examined July 29:

We have two pits and employ about 70 children and young persons. They are all trailers and bring the coal from the forehead to the pit bottom. They are trailed on rails the whole way. The corves and coal weigh about 7 cwt. in one pit and in the other 5.5 cwt. The distances vary from 800 to 150 yards. The trailers have about 16 journeys backwards and forwards. We work a little to dip but very little. The trailer will help to riddle a little, if he is a strong boy. The trailers are employed by the men who hag. They earn from 1s. 4d. to 1s. 6d. per day and in the small pit from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 4d. per day. We have no horses in these pits. The roads are five feet and a half good in height. They are not lower anywhere where the seam is six feet but where it is five feet the roads will be about four feet. We have another seam about three feet six and the roads are about the same. In the thin pits they go as soon as 10 years old; perhaps a few at 9. We have no trappers, the trailers open the doors themselves. We have no fire-damp and only a little black-damp. We work upwards to the rise and let the roof fall behind in the workings. We leave the pillars about 10 yards in the end and we leave about seven and a half yards when we get higher up. The boys go down from half-past 5 to 6 o'clock. They keep coming up from 3 to 5 o'clock. They don't often work much longer, except there is something particular the matter. They are generally well treated and they are not overdone. The roads are kept dry.

No.301 - Francis Lightfoot, aged 15 and a quarter. Examined at Broughton Moor Colliery, July 29:

I've been four years in the pit. I'm a trailer. I've never been anything else. I find it hard work sometimes when I've much to trail. We don't trail regularly. Sometimes but a little on Mondays and more on other days. I help to fill and riddle. I go down at halfpast 5. I stop at 12 for my 'corn' or feed and stop 20 minutes or a quarter of an hour. I come out about 4 o'clock, sometimes at 3, and sometimes as late as 5. I like my work. My back is sore where I hit it against the roof. I have not been much poorly. [He looks well and is not ill-formed.] I always come away with the collier who employs me. It is my brother I work for. I used to go to day-school before I came to pit. I once went to a Sunday-school. I don't go to Sunday-school, I'd rather stop away, though I have clothes to go in. Sometimes I go to chapel. I can read but I cannot write, I think, now. Christ was the son of David. He was crucified, that is, nailed to the cross. I was taught to pray and I do sometimes. Christ died to save us. [He has a fair knowledge of multiplication and the Bible, and reads tolerably.] There's no night-school for me to go to and I go to bed when I've had my supper but I'm not much tired.

No.302 - William Gibbons, aged 11 and a half. Examined at the same Colliery:

I trail and have been at it a year. I trail by myself. It is not very hard, except when the corf gets off the road and that's not often. It is not wet. it's dusty where I trail. I help to riddle and to fill. I never trail more than thirteen corves and sometimes I trail only nine a day. I stop only 10 minutes. I get up at 4 and have my breakfast of porridge and milk and a great bit of bread. I have a bit of bread and butter and cheese in the pit at 12 o'clock. I shall have potatoes and meat and beer, as much as I like when I come out at night. I have my face, neck and legs washed every night and then I go to bed about 8 o'clock. I never play but I'm not tired. I once went to day-school. I never go to Sunday-school. My father and mother tell me to go to Sunday-school, but I don't. I like better to lake. [Does not know his letters.] I don't know where I shall go when I die, if I'm bad. I don't go to church or chapel. I have never been taught to pray. I never heard of Jesus Christ.

No.303 - David Saul, aged 10 and a half. Examined at the same Colliery:

I'm a trailer. My work does not tire me. I go to no school. I can read in Reading Made Easy. Christ died for us; he was nailed on a cross. My father and mother go to a Quaker Meeting. I went with them. They are dead. I work for a man now who does not send me to school or to chapel. They use me well in the pit and never beat me.

No.304 - Joseph Fox, aged 13 and three quarters. Examined at the Cookson Colliery, Workington, August 2:

I go down at half-past 5 or 6 o'clock. I come out at between 6 and 7 o'clock. I am a trailer. My work tires me at times. I work for my father. I would rather work for him than anyone else. The engine never stops and we never stop more than 10 minutes at a time. We stop more than once; perhaps an hour altogether. We get bread and nothing else. The hardest part of the work is to push the corves up the steep to get the coals up to throw into the baskets. I make as much as 2s. a-day. My father gives me a 6d. at the fortnight end. I don't go to school. I've never been at all to school. I don't go to Sunday-school, I've not clothes enough. My mother works outside and she has 1s. a-day. I have a brother at sea. I can't read and don't know my letters. I never go to church and chapel. I never heard of God. I don't know who made the world and I never heard of Jesus Christ. I never say prayers. I don't know what prayers are. I don't know what 5 X 6 is. 4 x 5 is 20.

[He measures 4 feet 11 inches. He has only been in a pit eight or nine months. He drove a waggon before in Whitehaven.]

No.305 - William Fox, father of the last witness:

I don't send my boy to school - has not been at all. There are no Sunday-schools about here. I earn 5s. a-day with my son. I have another at sea and three girls at home.

[This family earn on an average £2. weekly.]

No.306 - Joseph Hodgson, 15 years old. Examined July 30, near Whitehaven:

I work at Lord Lonsdale's Countess Pit. This week I am on at night. I go down at 6 in the evening and come out at 6 in the morning. I get my breakfast of porridge and milk when I come out and then go to bed and get up between 2 and 4 o'clock. I get dinner of potatoes and meat - always meat - and then we get ready to go to pit. I drive a horse. I used to trap. It's four years since I began to go. I like driving. I did not like trapping, it was such hard work. I had so many doors to trap and to run before the horse to open six doors at once. They used me very well though; it was not very wet where I was. I had a lantern. I had no time to amuse myself. I was the same time in the pit. I earn 7s. a-week now. I had 6d. a-day as a trapper. It is hard work driving only where we have to hold back the baskets going down hill. I feel tired in my right leg and arm when I've done work. We have our left shoulder against the horse's tail and our right leg right arm against the tram. There is no break to keep the trams back. I was lamed once for a horse kicked me. We stop at 12 for supper. We have bread and coffee. I have never been to day-school since I went to the pits. I go to Sunday-school now. I can read the Bible. I can write a little now, but not much. I go to a meeting-house school. I like the night-work as well as the day-work and we take it week and week about.

[Has a fair knowledge of the Gospel but very little of arithmetic. He looks well and strong]

No.307 - George Tait, aged 17 and three quarters. Examined at same time:

I work in the little pit bottom and when the baskets come down I shove them along a few yards. It is not hard work and does not tire me. I go to work at 5 in the evening, and come out at 6 in the morning. I stop at 12 o'clock for about an hour and have bread and coffee to eat. I have the same for breakfast and I have potatoes for dinner - I have generally meat with them. I have 8d. a-day. They treat me well. I go to Sunday-school and can read in the Bible. I have learnt religion.

[He has a fair knowledge of the Gospel. Spells tolerably well, has an indifferent knowledge of figures. He is under-sized and has had some mesenteric disease and is of a scrofulous habit; his brother was diseased.]

No.308 - Joseph Davidson, 12 years old. Examined at same time:

I go to the pit at half-past 5. I have been working in pits a long time. I was a trapper till lately. I grease wheels. I used to go at the same time when I was a trapper as now and came out between 5 and 6 in the evening. I used to trap at night every other week. I liked it as well by night as by day. They used me well enough. I had one door to open but five checks to open. It tire me rather to run and open the checks and to mind the door. I had 3s. a-week for trapping. I had a lamp always. It was a dry place where I was. I liked it well enough. I never fought, or was leathered. I go to Sunday-school now. I read in the Testament and they don't explain what I read at all, they just make us read it through. I don't know what sort of death Christ died but he died to save us. Adam the first man. I have not learnt figures. I have often been badly in my head and belly.

[He appears to have had an affection of the hip-joint. He says he never was lame since he was in the pit.]

No.309 - Anthony Fisher, aged 17 and a half:

I am a driver. I have been a driver five years. We big ones help a little to riddle and fill when we like. We hag a little when we like, in order to learn. I shall begin to hag in about a year and a half. I work by night as well by day, week and week about. I like to work by day best, because I get more rest by night. I get to bed at about 5 and get up at 3 or 4 in the afternoon, when we work the night shift. We get plenty to eat and have bacon day for dinner. We get mutton or beef on Sundays. I was at school long since but I don't go now at all. I can't read. We have to hold the baskets back going down hill by putting my left shoulder against the horse and my right arm and leg on the basket. I once lamed my right shoulder so. I was a trapper before. I didn't like it so well, because I had to run on before to mind so many checks; many more checks before than now. The boys don't fight in the pits, or get ill-used. I was crushed with the baskets. I got hurt by my own fault coming too fast down a brow. All the trappers have lanterns. I never knew a trapper leave a door. If he were to do it he would be licked. Lads have their wages stopped sometimes. I earn sometimes 24s. a-fortnight by extra work. My regular pay is 1s. 8d. a-day. My father had a free house and was a long time ailing and supported by the employers and his widow has the free house now. We have two lodgers now and my brother is the engine-man and has 2s. 2d. a-day.

No.310 - George Allen, 10 years old. Examined at same time:

I am a trapper and have five doors to open and two pair of checks. I like it very well. I earn 6d. a-day. I go every Sunday to school and can read in the Testament. I am a little tired when I come out of the pit. We play sometimes as we go along the road home. I have not been badly since I was in the pit.

No.311 - Williamson Peile, Esq., Colliery Viewer, Whitehaven. Examined July 31:

In one of Lord Lonsdale's collieries do the colliers themselves employ children - they are exclusively paid by us. Their work is first that of trapping; secondly, that of coupling, which consists of linking and unlinking the trains of carriages, or greasing the axletrees of the carriages and thirdly, of driving. The drivers have to hold back the carriages in descending but I don't recollect any accident resulting from it. Girls do it very easily and it is not hard work for boys. Sometimes they are awkward in commencing it but soon get accustomed to it. It is only the empty

baskets that they push back in this way, never full ones. With full ones they use a bit of stick put through the wheels, called burrs or breaks. We have no trailers. We carry the basket completely to the foreheads, or place of working, with the horses in general. In particular situations the hagggers or colliers are employed to bring the coal down in wooden boxes from the forehead to the steer - a place in which the coal is removed into baskets - then taken by the horses. The hagggers are paid accordingly. The trappers begin about 9, not often younger. When boys apply to be trappers we take them on but we do not seek them. The hours of work are 12 hours regularly both day and night. It is quite common to work day and night here. The shifts are from 6 to 6 and take the night turn alternate weeks. The night shift is the heaviest week, especially for the children - they cannot get the same refreshment from sleep by day. The men themselves arrange to take the night shift alternately. The drivers will occasionally, being bigger boys, throw a part of their own work on to the trappers and make them run on before to open and shut checks which they ought often to do themselves. I never saw a trapper the worse for his work. When they come out of the pit they are as lively as possible and generally require being sent home. When they are out of the pit they like to stop and play. The drivers' work can only be done by young lads. It is fatiguing but not too heavy for them. They ride far too often on the baskets. A healthier set never can be seen. From drivers they become hagggers, at from 18 to 20 according to their strength. We have frequently made three shifts of eight hours each for the hagggers alone, when their baskets could be got quicker to the shaft. They work faster in this way and get out sooner but the drivers and trappers remain the 12 hours serving as before. I have no doubt that the children are altogether better used, owing to the employer and not the workmen being their master. They get their wages better and corporal punishments are prevented. No man is allowed to chastise a boy and it is very seldom done by the overmen. We never contract for boy's work for any length of time. We never take them as apprentices either.

Our system of ventilation is generally to divide the air into separate currents, carrying it through different districts of the colliery but we invariably apportion the quantity taken into these courses by means of a partial stopping or partial trap-door placed in the shorter return air-course because no one goes there but the overmen and ourselves and it cannot be meddled with being out of the way of the workmen and the traffic of the colliery. If there be no such stopping, *centris paribus*, the shorter air-course would take the whole of the air away from the longer. The air will always go the shortest possible distance to the upcast shaft and it would not be prevented from doing so by having the downcast shaft large. I hold, however, the necessity of having a large upcast shaft. I consider it essential to the safety of the pits to have trappers. It would not do to have the doors to open themselves. They would be liable to be constantly propped open by the drivers. We adopt the system of guard-doors, which we fortify against a blast by casing the door-post by a round wall, which can offer no impediment to the course of a blast from explosion. We have no school attached to our colliery but subscribe to all the existing local ones. We give free houses to nearly all our people. We always padlocked Davy lamps wherever we allow nothing else. We station a boy to stop every lamp goes in to examine and padlock it. We allow no fresh females to go down the pits. We still have a few still in.

No.312 - Thomas Mitchell, Esq., Surgeon. Examined at Whitehaven, July 31:

I attend professionally the colliers, amounting to 600, employed on the Whingill side by the Earl of Lonsdale. The children are generally healthy and strong. Their stature is partially decreased but I perceive no other effect until they have been hagggers for some time and they assume a cadaverous hue, and this I attribute to over-sweating and to breathing a not very pure atmosphere, which produces some constipation of the bowels and tardiness of liver. I do not consider 12 hours too much for either men or boys, considering the work they do. The colliers are not short-lived more than other labouring classes resident here, who are many of them mariners. Accidents have decreased materially during my practice here for 20 years owing to better care in guarding against them and the men too improve in their habits. The boys' accidents generally arise from the right leg slipping off the frame of the tram as they are stopping them going down hill, which fractures the fibula about three inches above the outer maleolus but more frequently only lacerates the skin about the same part. The falls of roofs generally cause internal injuries, producing death within a few hours after a large fall and in no one instance where death has occurred under these circumstances have there been sufficient external marks of violence to account for the speedy death

after the accident. I speak from the accidents I have seen myself but I wish to state that I have been compelled to judge solely from the sufferers, combined with severe pains in the loins and elsewhere and by retention of urine, that there *were* internal injuries thus produced, *for in no one of these instances have I been required by the coroner to make a post mortem examination* and when the coroner does not require it, the families give us no chance of opening the body to ascertain the real cause of death.

At the time of the great explosion, when 24 persons were killed, in 1839, in William Pit, I tried a new mode of treatment on the only man who was brought out alive and with success. He was scarcely possessed of any vitality at all and was in a state of asphyxia and he had been under the treatment of brandy and emetics and hot bricks and exposed to a pure atmosphere for three hours without effect, when I observed a by-stander applying a bottle of Preston salts, containing carbonate of ammonia, to his nostrils. I immediately requested to be allowed to have the bottle, the contents of which were dissolved in warm water and administered internally. Immediately after the administration of it, vomiting was produced, and the stomach was emptied of a quantity of green vitiated fluid. He then began to rally, was placed in a warm bath for about ten minutes, was wrapped up in a pair of warm new blankets sent to the Earl of Lonsdale's private infirmary, where he was put to bed and on the following morning he was able to return to his family and might have returned to his work but that his foot had been burnt by a hot brick. He was not burnt externally but was suffering under choke-damp, which follows the explosion of the carburetted hydrogen. Had he been burnt externally there would have been no difference and I shall apply the same remedy next time whether they are burnt externally or not, giving two drams to each dose, repeating every ten minutes. They must be treated otherwise as usual for burns. The ammonia stimulates and is an emetic without producing lassitude and general debility as many emetics do. I since administered the same remedy in a slighter case with equal success. The gas has an effect preventing the blood from being decarbonised and this is what produces asphyxia. The action of vomiting produced by the ammonia stimulates the action of the whole system. It is a rare occurrence for any falls to take place down the shaft, and I never recollect any owing to ropes breaking since I have been here.

No.313 - Thomas Westray, Esq., Coal-owner, of Cookson Colliery near Clifton. Examined at Workington, August 2:

I employ no children. I pay the hagggers so much per ton for the coal, which they deliver at the steth, a point in the pit and they employ the boys to trail the coal there. They are very often the children of the hagggers, who have the entire control over them. I do not take the management of my colliery. I leave it exclusively to the underground steward, Mr. Percival. I am not aware whether they work longer than other pits or not. It is perfectly voluntary for them to work as long or as short a time as they think proper. We compel the engineman and banksmen to attend upon them as long as the hagggers remain. We have no limitation whatever. I think it a very good plan for Government to regulate the labour of children. We attend well to ventilation. We never had a fatal accident from fire, and never from ropes breaking. Our pit is 54 fathoms. I am afraid that the children do not generally get sufficient education.

No.314 - Mr. John Percival, Colliery Agent to Mr. Westray. Examined at Cookson Colliery, near Workington, August 2:

We have about 20 boys employed here. They are all employed by the hagggers as trailers, except two drivers. They trail corves on railways. The coal weighs 4 cwt. The distances will run from 70 to 80 yards. They differ as to the times they go; some will trail four ton a-day and go 24 times a distance of 30 or 40 yards. We do not work to dip at all. The boys begin at about half past 6, but go down about 6 a-morning. In these country collieries they don't ride early as they do in sea-sale collieries. They come out at all hours, from 2 till 5 or 6 at night. Some time ago we did work till 7 o'clock at night, for about a month at farthest and this was owing to the winding-engine being out of repair and it could not do the work within the proper time. Now this is remedied and she can draw all the coal in nine hours. The men are very irregular indeed. They get a deal of money and they will idle after they get paid and then afterwards, at the end of the fortnight, they have to work longer hours than they otherwise would. I really think it would be a good plan to limit time coal was drawn, it would make the men more regular. The men are masters here. They are

free agents to work as long as they like. I don't think our colliery children are hurt by work. The men use the children well. They are most of them the sons of the colliers. I never allow them to be struck. We have never had girls in our pits. I am no advocate for womenfolk under ground. There is no fault in their working but it leads to immoral conduct. The children don't get enough schooling here. They are far keener after the dancing lessons than the reading lessons. They learn to dance and there is a dancing-master comes regularly all about here to teach them. The colliers are well off for food. They make 30s. a-week do the adults but there are few collieries where they are so well paid. There is a great deal of difference as to that. In a colliery I was in lately, I found 16s. the usual week's wages. We, don't use trappers. We make the drivers open and shut the doors. We have so little gas that it does not signify. We just let the men do, as they like. They stop and hang on to get as much coal as they choose. The banksmen and engineer wait on them.

No.315 - James Samson, 34 years old. Examined at the same place:

I am a collier. I began at 6 years old. Some come at 7 at 8 and at 9, just as they are put to it in a family. We begin to go down at half-past 5 and come out at about half past 5. We work 12 hours sometimes shorter and sometimes longer. I have known the pit worked 16, but that was accidental. The trailers get 2s, that's the general wage per day but there are others where they get only 1s 6d. The boys are like the others. We all get enough of it. They are no over worked though. They don't get much schooling. Some go on Sundays and some do not. The colliers could make enough in nine hours but this is an easy colliery to work. We can't make more than 5s. a-day one day with another, that's what we look at. I can make 9s. some odd days; that is ourselves, with paying the trailer out of it. If we work very hard the boy gets more. I have four children too young for the pit, and send them all to school.

No.316 - Thomas Kendal, 16 years old. Examined at same place and time:

I have been working six years. I have trailed all the time. It is middling hard work. The longest day's work I ever did was 16 hours. It is generally 12 I work now. It doesn't tire me much working 12 hours. We stop two or three times a-day. Sometimes bread and water and a bit of butter or cheese. I have bacon and potatoes when I get home for supper. I used to go to school before I came to pits. I don't go to Sunday. I can read Testament. I don't know what death Christ died I can't write very much. 5 x 6 is 30. I don't know how much 7 x 8 is. 42 pence is 3s 4d. I have a brother who was 12 last July. He trails with me. I don't help to fill often.

No.317 - Mr. Alvan Penrice, Colliery Agent for Henry Curwen, Esq. Workington Hall. Examined August 2 1841:

The children begin as trappers at about 9. We employ the trappers and drivers. The haggars employ the trailers, who begin about 12 years of age. They often trail two together when young. The corves, when full, hold about 4 cwt. net. We have working to the dip. The trailers will have about 12 journeys to make in the day. The distance is not above 80 yards on the average, that is from the foreheads to the steth, whence the coal is brought 300 yards by horses to the shaft. The boys assist to fill sometimes. The boys are never allowed to remain after the haggars to fill or trail. We keep an excellent air in the pit and out working shaft is the downcast. We have had no accident with ropes breaking. The Harrington Pits we work on the same system but there we employ the trailers ourselves. There are two shafts; one is 95 fathoms deep and the other 60. It was in the Harrington John Pit that the explosion occurred in 1838, when 24 men and 16 boys were killed and not one was left to tell the tale how it happened. Some were descending the pit at the time and were blown out of the shaft. I should think that a fall in the air-course was the cause of it. It made havoc in the shaft. I was not agent at the time. Since I have had the management of that pit (since January, 1840) there has been no accident whatever - not a shilling has been paid away for accidents at all of any sort. There are 40 boys and 50 men now working in the John Pit and in the Hodgson Pit, which adjoins it, about 30 boys and 45 men. Children very rarely work 12 hours. Sometimes they do. The trappers do not work more than 10 or 11 hours on the average. We have Saint Monday and the colliers do not work much on that day, nor on alternate Thursdays, which is the beginning of a new pay. They will work 11 or 12 hours just before pay-day.

The sea into three of Mr. Curwen's pits, which were under the sea, on the 28th of July 1837, three years before I had the management. Ralph Coxton was the manager. They were working the pit out to sea and towards the rise. They were nearly two miles under the sea from the shaft. They were continually getting nearer to the water as the getting farther to the rise. It was a report among the men that there was some danger prior to the accident. There is no doubt that the pit was making salt water long before. Had I the management of the colliery I should certainly not have worked the colliery to anything like the same extent. Some got out. It happened in the night. None were left to tell how it happened, because where it broke in none escaped. The whole of the water had to pass through two drifts about six feet square. The bodies were never recovered. The funeral service was read over the pit-top. The place where the water broke in was discernible in the sea by the blackness of the place. It appeared that the hole was about 80 yards by 30. The colliery had been worked for 50 years and there must have been a large space excavated and it was all filled with water in two hours and a half.

I am quite sure that the children are not ill used. In the Buddle Pit, where we do not employ the trailers, they are quite as well treated by the men as those which we employ in the Harrington pits. I should say the miners in Cumberland were as well off and have as comfortable houses as anywhere in England.

No.318 - John Henry, aged 14 and a half. Examined at the Countess Pit (Lord Lonsdale's):

I am a driver. I came two years ago. I would rather be a driver than a trapper. I was a trapper before. I get more brass as a driver. I come at 6 and go away at 5 or half-past 5. We stop half an hour for dinner. I never help to fill or to riddle. I can read in the Testament and can write a little. There is no Sunday-school. I go to a Roman Catholic Sunday-school.

No.319 - Alexander Taylor, 14 years old. Examined, August 3, 1841, at, the George Pit, belonging to Mr. J. W. Fletcher of Grey Southern:

I am a trailer. I went in two years ago last Christmas. I always trailed. I have another to help me of 12 years old. It's not hard work. I go down at 6 o'clock in the morning and I come up at between 4 and 5. Sometimes I come up at 3, and sometimes I come at 6 - it is not regular. I have to trail and nothing else to do. I never fill. I have 30 and 33 journeys a-day; it's not too far. The roads are good and not wet. I trail without shoes or stockings. I stop an hour in the middle of the day - I have my corn then. I have been to day-school before I went to pits but not since, except a fortnight at nights but go now. I don't know why I don't know. I don't go to Sunday-school at Gray Southern - I don't go, because I don't like.

[He can read and write, and answers fairly. He measures 4 feet 9 inches. Strong, and not ill-formed.]

No.320 - Benjamin Atkinson, aged 12 years 8 months. Examined a time and place:

I have been at work four years. I have always trailed from the first. There are no trappers here, we have to open the doors as we go through ourselves. I work for John Stevenson. He pays me 1s. I trail 33 baskets a-day. I don't know how far I go each time. It tires me a good deal in my back sometimes. I go down at 6 in the morning and come up between 4 and 5. I stop an hour in the middle of the day. We always work longer just before pay-day. We stop till very near 6 then and it is then we are tired most. Last Saturday was pay-day. I like being in the pit. I have nobody to trail with me. I have to trail up hill a little way with loaded baskets. I don't go to school - I once did. There is a Sunday-school at Grey Southern. I don't go now to church or chapel, I know boys who do.

[I can get no answer why he does not go. He is ignorant of his letters and of everything else, a perfectly heathen]

child. He measures 4 feet 4.5 inches. The spinal column is sunk inwards. the muscle much developed and the breast likewise.]

No.321 - John Holmes, aged 11 years 3 months. Examined at same time and place:

I trail by myself. I have been two years at pit. I like it very well. I'd rather be there than at school. My work does not tire me. I never feel tired. I always get plenty to eat. I stop after the hagger to play sometimes, but not to work. The pit is dry. I have been to school but not since I've been at pit. I don't go to Sunday-school, because I don't like it and I'd rather play. I used to read the Testament. I don't know who Jesus Christ was. I never heard tell of God neither. I can't read in the Testament. I am taught to say my prayers and I say them. I don't know who I pray to. They use me well in the pit. I have 1s. a-day.

[He measures 4 feet 4.5 inches. Immense development of muscle on each side of the spine the whole way from the top to the bottom of the back.]

No.322 - John Hill. Examined at the same time and place:

I am under-ground steward at this pit and at the other. There are but three boys at this George Pit now. They each trail the baskets themselves. The coal weighs 4 cwt., about. They have about 33 baskets to trail everyday, and about 140 yards each way. They have not to fill or to riddle. The men employ them but we are obliged to control them, for they get to fight and quarrel - they are a sad set. The roads are far drier here than the Broughton Colliery. Ben Atkinson does not trail above five yards up hill. It is easy trailing. We are all robbing here. [A phrase for the operation of getting the pillars out after the rest of the coal had been wrought.] We have had no accidents here for three years. I never knew a rope break here nor have we any gas. I once knew two iron swivels break on a chain going down without any weight to them, which is the most singular. The children are greatly neglected by their parents. They give them no education, except some few that send them. The boys do go a little to night-schools after their work. They go down about 6, they come out at half-past 4 or 5 o'clock in a regular way. The boys are easier wrought in our colliery now than ever they were. At Westray's colliery it used many a time to be 9 or 10 o'clock at night when they came home. They work a deal longer hours in many parts. The men work very regularly here in this pit - they are a very steady set of men but it is not so elsewhere. The pits are not worked by three hours so long as they were. An average collier would earn a guinea a-week who worked 10 hours a day. There used to be plenty of women about here in pits but none now. It's a thing that isn't right at all having women in pits and it's being left off even at Whitehaven. The men are not stinted to time. They work themselves and the trailers as long as they like - they are not stinted at all. The boys begin to go to pits by 8 or 9 years old. The boys trap our doors who trail but we have not much gas, or we could not do it in that way. The accident at the Workington Pit was a terrible thing. I have heard men myself say they could hear the sough of the sea a month before the accident and there were many left the pit in consequence and still they went on working it. Mr. Curwen was told several times beforehand of the danger. Bowness, the former steward, had marked a post to go no further with the pit and yet when Coxton got it, he went 100 yards further and that with a sort of clay roof only. It was famous coal.

No.323 - John Wynn, aged 7 years 3 months. Examined at the John Pit, Harrington, August 3rd:

I have been three months at the pit. I trap and get up at 4 o'clock and get down at 5 in the mornings. I do nought but open the door. I have no light. I like it very well. I have been to school. I don't go to Sunday-school. It's a good bit since I went to school. I have forgot my letters. I come out about 4, and it's sometimes rather later. I'd rather go to school than be in the pit.

[Measures 3 feet 7 inches.]

No.324 - John Daly, aged 8 years and 9 months:

I trail with my brother, he's 11. I've been more than two years. I like trailing. I trail 24

corves a-day. It does not tire me at all. My brother behaves well to me. I'd rather stop in the pit than go to school. I go down at 6 in the morning. I don't know what time we come up, it's never one time - never later than 6, nor before 2. I don't go to Sunday-school. I go to chapel, but not regular. I don't know who Jesus Christ was. I never heard about his dying. I never was taught my letters. We never fill. I stop about an hour at fore-end of the day and we have our bread and coffee. I shall have bacon and new potatoes to-day.

[He measures 3 feet 9; a very sharp, child.]

No.325 - Joseph Dunn, 10 years old:

I trail. I have always trailed. I have been in about one year and nine months. I trail by myself, it is very hard for me. There is a place where I have to hurry a short way uphill and its hard there. We have to open the doors ourselves. I trail 16 corves a-day. I work from 6 to 6 sometimes and sometimes about 4. We don't quarrel much in the pit. It tires me a good deal at night. I have been to Sunday-school and go now and to church and all. I can read well enough, but not in Testament. I don't know who Christ was.

[He measures 4 feet 1 inch, and has no apparent malformation.]

No.326 - James Gambles, aged 12 years 3 months. Examined together with the three foregoing witnesses at the John Pit:

I train and have been four years in the pit. I trapped first. I like being in the pit very well. I trail alone. It tires me a good deal in some places where its up hill but it's not far. I don't help to fill. I come down between 5 and 6 o'clock and come up at about 4 and sometimes later a little. I don't go to Sunday-schools - I like to go. I like to lake better. I am taught to say my prayers. I never heard of Jesus Christ but I have of God. I don't know whether he made the world or not.

[He measures 4 feet 5 inches.]

No.327 - James Rotherey, 14 years old. Examined at Whitehaven, August 4:

I work in Lord Lonsdale's William Pit. I am a coupler. I have been four years at it. I go down at 6 and come away at 7, or sometimes till 8. When we are done before we come up sooner, sometimes at 5 and 6. When the horses have done their work then the shift is over. Next week we shall work the night-shift and go down at 6 and come up at 6. I like the day-shift best because I can't sleep so sound by day and then I am sleepy at night-work. I hang baskets on at one of the workings on the rolley-road side and mind two pair of checks. I mostly go about all the time. I put the lockings on the trams and go with the baskets into the workings. It does not tire me very much. I have to shove the trams but not far - five or six yards. They have the baskets on them, sometimes one and sometimes two. I was at a charity school before I came to the pits. I used to go to Sunday-school till the last week or two and I am going again. I stopped because the teacher I liked was away. I can read the Testament. They explain it to us. I can write also. Jesus Christ came to forgive sins. He was killed by the Jews on a cross - on Calvary cross. Apostles were godly people appointed to preach the Gospel. We must believe in Christ. He rose for our justification. The Israelites were forty and three days in the wilderness. Jesus led them out of it. Trespasses mean sins.

No.328 - James Atkinson, 17 years old. Examined at same time:

I work in the William Pit. I have been nearly 10 years. I have been trapper first. I work 12 hours one day with another. I like the day-shift best. It is not so dullish. We are not so sleepy. When we are in the night-shift we get home generally at 6 and then we have breakfast and get to bed about 8. Then we get up at half-past 4 and go to the pit at a quarter past 5 after we have had our dinner. We have bacon every day for dinner and mutton at week ends. I like the work of driver very much. I have to drive. We have to keep back the full baskets coming to the shaft. We do it by

putting the right foot on the tram. There is an iron knob on it and putting our left shoulder to the horse and push the top of the basket with our right hand. It is not so hard. It was hard till I was accustomed to it. I was lamed at first by slipping my foot off and was off work a week and three days. Some of the horses try to kick us. Some are worse than others. We have trappers to nearly all the doors We help to fill at our own pleasure and I hag at times also. I have 9s. a-week. I was at a private school before I came to the pit and I have been at a Sunday-school till lately. I can read the Bible and write. Jesus wrought miracles. The Jews put Jesus to death. He died for to save sin.

No.329 - John Rothery, 16 years of age:

I am a driver at the William Pit. I like it well enough. It does not tire me much. I like day-shifts best. I am more sleepier at night-shifts. The hardest work is when we hold back going down a hill. We stop at 12 o'clock to eat till near 1. We have bread and coffee. I was laid up once with a broken arm. I went up against the coal-wall, and got my arm fast. I've been to school but it's long since. I used to go to Sunday-school. I go sometimes to Anabaptist meeting. I can't read. I used to read. I can't write. Jesus died for sinners. We must serve him. I have heard of the Apostles but I have forgot who they were. It was not on the account of clothes that I left going to Sunday-school but I like better going about.

[He has no knowledge of figures. He looks very sickly and sallow.]

No.330 - Jonathan Johnson, aged 11 years 11 months:

I trap in the William Pit. I have trapped there five years, I am quite sure. I trap two doors. I move one check and put lockings into the wheels. I like being a trapper. I'd rather go to school, it's far better, one learns. I have a lantern. When the baskets are not passing I sing and lake but I don't leave the door. I like the day-shifts best. I'm sleepy in the night-shifts. I sleep well in the daytime when I'm in bed. They don't use me well. They welt me when I'm late in. It's not my fault always, because I can't get down sometimes. It's the chicken welts me. James Atkinson [a driver] is the chicken. He made us cry. I complained but he has not welted me since. I like being in altogether. I come out sometimes at 6 and sometimes at 5. I go regularly to the Sunday-school, a Baptist one. I can't read the Testament but in little reading-books. I learn religion. I shall go to hell if I die. I know Christ died to save us. He is in heaven. I learn to pray. I can't spell 'man' or 'boys.' 2 x 5 is 10. I don't know how many two tens is. I used to be frightened at the horses, one once kicked me. I lie a-bed sometimes in the morning but not at night. I lake about sometimes for two hours when I get out of pit before I get home.

No.331 - Mr. William Thornton, Under-ground Steward at the William Pit. Examined at Whitehaven, August. 4:

We cannot so conveniently use shafts with our horses because we could not turn so well as with traces. Where a number of baskets are brought together there is always a shaft used but where we bring one at a time, as from the foreheads to the level line, the drivers push them back with their shoulders.

My uncle, William Thornton, was an overman at the Workington Colliery, and he warned Caxton, the steward, of the probability of the sea breaking in and was discharged in consequence. I heard before myself that there was danger. We keep 70 fathoms above us nearly all of sandstone. 60 fathoms would be safe, but it would of course depend on the nature of the soil.

Each driver will make 13 journeys, averaging 700 yards each way.

I never admired conductors in the shafts. We had them once, iron rods and there was many a stop with them. I think it safest without them. There has never been a rope broke with anyone since I have been here nearly 18 years. We draw with five-inch ropes and the shaft is 110 fathoms and we draw 11 cwt of coals.

We send a man constantly round the works night and day to examine the state of the colliery. Four go regularly on Sunday evenings.

No.332 - The Rev. Henry Curwen, Son of the Proprietor of the Workington Colliery examined August 3 at Workington states;-

There was a report some time before the accident at our colliery that sand feed was apprehended but I am satisfied that no warning reached Mr. Curwen as to the liability of an irruption of the of the sea.

I never heard of any notice being written or painted of danger in proceeding with the work and I have been often in the colliery and must have seen it if it had been there. After the accident had occurred but not till then, I heard that the men had been paid higher wages for working in the pit. The report I heard was that the pit would be lost if we continued working it for three weeks owing to a sand-feed and I spoke to my mother as to whether my brother should be informed of it but it was a mere rumour. Mr. Curwen wished also to state that Coxton, the steward at the time of the accident, was engaged by him at Mr. Dunn's recommendation, of Newcastle, as a man perfectly capable to take charge of the colliery and Mr. Curwen placed implicit confidence in him in consequence.

No.333 - Joseph Parin, Esq., Surgeon. Examined August 4, 1841 at Whitehaven:

I was present after the irruption of water at the Workington Colliery.

[This gentleman, on hearing that his evidence would be printed, refused to give it.]

No.334 - Dickenson, Esq., Surgeon, Workington. Examined August 5:

It is my impression that no blame attached, as respects the accident in the Workington Colliery to any one but the steward Coxton. They let the pillars be worked too far away. I have understood, and the roof sank. A more humane man rather than Mr. Curwen does not exist. He had no idea of there being danger I am sure, for though reports had reached him, they were not such as he could rely on. The water mounted very fast. The air forced out of the bearmouth [a horizontal entrance] blew my hat off. I recovered all those who were brought out. Some of them were suffering from suffocation. Accidents have been very rare latterly at these collieries. Mr. Curwen has given positive orders that no child under 10 years of age should go into his pits, and I believe no female is allowed to go down.