

Derbyshire Times and Chesterfield Advertiser.

Saturday 7th. Jan. 1865.

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Wages Case

Joseph Wright, coalowner, Greenhill, was summoned by John Hardwick, collier, Apperknowle, with refusing to pay him a balance of 5/0 wages due for work done. It appeared that a short time since defendant raised the price of a certain part of the work done at his pit, and complainant had worked some time under the advanced price, when defendant found it again necessary to reduce the prices, and consequently gave complainant notice of the same. Complainant then said that he would require 14 days notice before he could allow the reduction to be made in his wages, The 14 days notice was then given, and on the expiration of that time defendant stopped the amount claimed out of the 14 days work, Defendant said, in answer to the Bench, that he gave the advance without any pressure from the men, and thought that the men ought to submit to the reduction when he told them he could no longer give it, without having to give the 14 days notice. - Ordered to pay the amount claimed and costs.

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A Working Mens Festival.

On Friday last the workmen in the employ of Mr. S. Lancaster, Coalmaster, of Newbold, held their annual festival at the house of Mr. J. Heath, the Goldminers Arms, Newbold, when 34 persons sat down to an excellent dinner. The chair was occupied by Mr. J.K. Bolton, and after the repast, the usual toasts were given interspersed with songs and sentiments. On Monday, the wives and sweethearts of the workmen had a most excellent tea at the above house, after which they indulged in dancing, spending a very agreeable evening.

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Miners National Association.

Throughout the latter part of the Wednesdays sitting of the Council of this Association, at Wigan and again Thursday, the rules of the Society underwent revision. The alterations made, though somewhat extensive, involve only questions of details as to the management, and do not call for mention. This part of the Council's business will keep them together until today (Friday) but then the proceedings will terminate. The date and place of the next assembly had not been fixed last night.

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Mine Accident at Hasland.

On Wednesday last, an inquest was held at the Furness Inn, Derby Road, Hasland, on the body of Wm. Elliott, coal miner, aged 42 years, who was injured in a coalpit belonging to the Wingerworth Iron Company on the 31st. ult. and died on the 9th. inst. - George Moss, of Chesterfield, coal miner, said that deceased was hanger-on at the bottom of the Hungerhill coalpit. On Saturday, the 31st. ult at 10 a.m., witness had been at the bottom of the shaft and had gone a few yards from the bottom when he heard a bang on the plates which the wagons ran on. He returned to the bottom and found deceased lying down with one leg on the plate, sprotling and groaning. His head was bleeding. Witness called for assistance and deceased was sent up the shaft. He spoke before he was sent up but he did not know what he was saying and did not say how the accident had happened. Witness thought deceased had put a loaded waggon on and got it too far on the chair and then in pulling the tub backwards with his hook from the chair, and the tub being probably fast, his feet might have slipped from under him and caused him to fall backwards on the plate. - Charles Houghton, manager, said that he was at the pit bottom ten minutes after the accident and examined the place carefully. He could find no symptoms of anything having fallen down the shaft. Deceased always wore clogs with iron which was very dangerous on metal plates. He thought deceased had fallen backwards in pulling off a wagon from the chair. His hook was found attached to the waggon on the chair as if he had been pulling it and the hook had slipped from his hand. - Verdict "Accidental Death".

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Accident at Clay Cross.

On Monday an inquest was held at Clay Cross on the body of Patrick Roach, coalminer, aged 26 years, who was killed on Friday the 16th. inst., by a fall of bind in a coalpit. About 10 a.m. on Friday, deceased was at work in No. 4 Pit. He was engaged in throwing some dirt out of the stall, when a piece of bind, about a yard and a half long, more than a foot thick, and about one yard wide, fell on him. He shouted to the men who were with him, and they went to him and found deceased lying on his side with the bind on his loins and legs. The bind was lifted off him, and deceased got from under. He was sent home immediately and Mr. Goddall, surgeon, attended him but he died at twenty minutes past four the same day. John Brown, the viewer, said he examined the place on Saturday morning and found that if deceased had set a prop the accident would not have happened. It was a slip in the roof, and he ought to have set a prop there. There was a prop reared up ready for him to set. - Verdict "Accidental Death".

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Wages Case.

John Hatfield, Beetwell Street, Chesterfield, was summoned by George Swallow, of Chesterfield, Collier, for non-payment of 15/- wages due to him by defendant in respect of work done by him for the complainant (?) at the Inkerman Colliery, Brampton. Settled by paying the amount of wages and costs. An order was made on the same defendant at last Petty sessions for a similar case, at the same Colliery.

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Assault.

Samuel Robinson, Joseph Robinson and Francis Robinson of Wardlow were charged by Robert Robinson with assaulting him at the above named place on the 26th. December 1864. - Joseph Robinson was fined 5/- and Costs 13/-, Samuel Robinson 5/- and Costs 12/- and Francis Robinson 2/6 and Costs 14/6 or in default to be committed for 21 days imprisonment.

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Miners National Assembly.

The Council of this Association opened its first meetings since elections at the Horse and Jockey Inn, Wigan on Monday evening. Mr. Alexander M'Donald of Holytown, President. Districts represented comprised a body of 25,000 miners, viz - Farnsworth and Kearsley, John Worrall - South Yorkshire, John Normansell - Haydock, G. Pickard - West Yorkshire with the districts of Wakefield and Methley, William Brown - Wigan, John Howard - Tipton, William Milward. There were also present the secretary, Mr. Thomas Stevenson of Rothwell and the treasurer, Mr. William Pickard of Wigan. The day was occupied in the reception of reports from several districts. The president reports from Scotland that at the present time they are without strikes. They, the men, were in active agitation for the eight hour system. Two counties had already adopted it and it was expected that in the course of three or four months the larger portion of Scottish miners would be enjoying the benefits of eight hours working time. Further Mr. M'Donald said the miners of Scotland were most anxious to obtain Parliamentary changes in regard to the existing laws regulating the workings of mines. A Wigan delegate reported peace and quietness in the district. There was no strike and the men were anxious to avoid such extreme measures if possible. There were also desires to form co-operative societies in commencing to work collieries of their own. From South Yorkshire it was reported that the societies were in a very healthy condition and the members steadily increasing. Since the late conference the men had got rid of the High Royd and Oaks strikes and on the whole favourably to the men. In every case where the employers stated they would give an advance of wages it has been given and the advances in some instances was beyond the expectation of the workmen. At the Oaks Colliery the employers had, in addition, given a Christmas Box of 1/6d to each of the men. The Council is particularly anxious to watch the operations of coal-cutting machines, the introduction of which, so far from meeting with opposition is rather hailed with satisfaction as likely to reduce the serious loss of life which takes place, but a representative from the Oaks and High Royd districts reported the machines in use there to be failures as also is that at the Silkstone Wharnccliffe. Indeed, generally the existing machines were said to be failures. From West Yorkshire a delegate reported a strike but it was anticipated that it would be settled by arbitration in one instant and the most important. In other respects the district was at peace and determined to remain so. From Farnsworth and Kearsley a delegate report that since they joined the Association 17 months they have supported a lock-out which cost over £5000 and they have at the present moment over £1000 in the funds. The men are, as a Society, determined to abide by the National Association, whose object it is to carry out even measures calculated to work to the weal of the miner. Last night a public meeting was held at the Commercial Hall and was addressed by the President and delegates.

Second Day - Tuesday.

The Law of Master and Servant.

The president called the attention of the meeting to this subject and detailed the various movements of the executive committees to obtain the abolition of the Act had been engaged in. He stated that the ironworkers had placed at the disposal of the executive committee last week £150. Whereas the miners had been the first to move in the matter of calling a national conference on the subject he thought they could not do otherwise than make a subscription in aid of the funds of the executive for carrying on the agitation. This proposition was supported by Mr. Normansell, Mr. Pickard and the other members of the Council after which Mr. Pickard

moved, seconded by Mr. Normansell, that this Council vote the sum of £15 as the first instalment or contribution for the executive funds for carrying on the agitation. Secondly it was moved by Mr. Howard, seconded and carried, that Mr. M'Donald carry the money to Glasgow and there place it in the hands of the executive.

Parliamentary Agitation.

Mr. Normansell called the attention of the Council to the proceedings at the last Conference where Messrs. M'Donald, Stevenson and Pickard were appointed a deputation to go to Parliament at the opening of the session. No time had been fixed, the question having been left to the Council for decision. He said that he deemed it the duty of the Council now to fix a date for the deputation to go. It was agreed on the motion of Mr. Worrall, seconded by Mr. Brown, that the deputation shall be in London by the 20th. of February.

Dr. Miller.

Mr. Richardson that considering the great service rendered by Dr. Miller of Dudley ... parliamentary deputations this meeting of the National Council would strongly recommend to the miners of Cleveland Hills and Staffordshire to send him to London and support him while there as an extra delegate on the subject of Parliamentary changes in Mining Statutes. Mr. Howard seconded the motion which was agreed to.

Truck.

Mr. Pickard moved that the deputation use their influence to get Mr. Ayrton M.P. to introduce the amended Truck Act now in his hands in the coming session and if possible to get a parliamentary committee or commission to enquire into the working of the present statute. Mr. Milward seconded the motion which was carried.

Deputations duties whilst in London.

Mr. Normansell moved that the deputation while in London should endeavour to obtain the changes pointed out by the several conferences of miners as to be seen in the Miners National Transactions and other records, to wit - Education of the Young, the Restriction of their Hours of Labour to eight, changes in the present Inspection Act to make that Act more efficient, the appointment of Sub-Inspectors in a sufficient number so as to examine fully all mines to prevent accidents, training of a better class of managers, these to be certified managers as fit to do duty in that office, the removal of all the females from the pit-banks, a change in the coroners inquest of the country so far as relates to mine accidents and it had been recommended by the Parliamentary Committees of 1850 and 1852 as alteration in the law in regard to the weighing of miners materials, that is to be only weighed by Imperial Standard Weight and that miners shall have full power to appoint and retain on the pit-bank to see their material weighed any of their own class they may think to appoint and pay. Mr. Worrall seconded Mr. Normansell's proposition and it was carried.

Councils of Conciliation and Courts of Arbitration.

Mr. Brown moved that this meeting of the Miners National Council strongly recommend that all the trades in the United Kingdom to take up the question of Courts of Conciliation and Courts of Arbitration immediately. This Council expresses its willingness at once to co-operate with all trades in the matter. The Council would commend to the attention of all trades the expression of Mr. Justice Byles on this subject at the recent assizes in Stafford.

Wednesday.

At ten o'clock on Wednesday morning the deliberations of the Council of this Association were continued at the Horse and Jockey Inn, Wigan. For the greater part of the day the Council were engaged in discussing the state of the law on compensation for accidents. The President informed the meeting that as the law stood at present the employer was only responsible for his own acts or for those of the person who represented him. There was no responsibility on the heads of the firemen, deputies, banksmen and engineers or in short for any of the officials employed in and about mines save alone the employer and his manager so far as compensation for accident was concerned. The President expressed his opinion that an attempt ought to be made to alter the law so that the owner should be made responsible for the acts of all incompetent officials and all the members of the Council spoke in somewhat similar effect. Ultimately the following resolution was placed before the meeting by Mr. Normansell and agreed to - That the deputation, while in London, shall endeavour to see those gentlemen who are disposed to obtain a change in the existing law on compensation with a view to making an alteration in that law so that the employer shall be responsible for the acts of incompetent officials such as banksmen, engineers, firemen, deputies etc. This was seconded and agreed to. The Council also resolved to appeal to other trades of a dangerous character to join the Association in agitation for the repeal of the existing law. A case in the Wigan district which was thought one for compensation under the existing law was laid before the Council who decided to take the matter up at once. The remainder of the day was spent in revising the rules and transacting other business having reference to the matters of detail. Sittings were expected to be bought to a close today.

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Terrible Accident in Belgium.

Nearly Sixty Lives Lost.

On the 3rd. instant an explosion of firedamp took place at a coalpit called St. Catherine situated at Dour in the province of Hainault, Belgium. This pit has already been the scene of a calamity of a similar nature for only last year 17 miners lost their lives in it from the effects of an explosion. The present catastrophe occurred just as the men were about to leave work and ascend. At this time a strong column of flames was seen to rush out of the principal shaft seize on the ropes and machines in the roof and with the rapidity of lightning the building erected over the shaft was in flames from one end to the other. It would be impossible to depict the horror of the scene which ensued. Mothers instantly assembled calling for their children and children calling for their parents all uttering most heart-rending cries. At the time of the explosion more than 100 workmen were exposed to the effects of the fearful blast. The work of delivery was commenced immediately. This was not an easy matter for so dense was the smoke which arose that the few men who at first volunteered to descend were obliged to return or they would certainly have been suffocated.

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Dinner to Workmen.

On Saturday the 14th. inst. the workmen of the Green Lane Colliery, Dronfield belonging to Messrs. Booker and Co. partook of an excellent supper provided at the house of Mr. John Ekin, the Bridge Inn, Dronfield. Mr. T. Hall was called to the chair and William Booker, one of the workmen, to the vice-chair. The chairman proposed the health of the firm and in doing so commented at some length of the character of the late William Booker, the kind feeling which had existed between him and his employers and hoped that the feeling which had existed and now did would continue to exist. After these remarks the health of the present representatives of the firm was drunk. Mr. William Gray then proposed the health of Mr. James Bennett, the manager of the Green Lane and Woodhouse Collieries, which was warmly responded to.

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Assault Case.

Henry Walters, manager of the New Inkerman Colliery, Brampton, was charged by John Reynolds of Brampton, a youth employed under him in the same pit, with assaulting him on the 9th. inst. in the Colliery. Fined 1/-, costs 16/- or in default 7 days.

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Leaving Work without Notice.

John Platts, collier, was brought up charged under warrant, by William Walters, underviewer, Clay Cross, with leaving his work without notice at No. 1 Pit. Ordered to pay 19/6 costs and return to work.

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Important to Unions and Friendly Societies.

At the Rotherham Court House on Monday a case of considerable importance to Trade Unions and Friendly Societies came on for hearing. A miner named James Barley was charged with feloniously appropriating to his own use £29 of money belonging to the miner's union. On the 26th. of November last, prisoner, who was a member of the miner's union at Rawmarsh, received from the treasurer, Isaac Hawkins, £20 to convey to the lodge at Wombwell for the relief of men locked out. A few mornings after the prisoner went to the treasurer and represented that during his absence from home his house had been broken into and the £20 stolen therefrom. Subsequent information having been obtained by the officers of the lodge caused them to believe that the prisoner had not had the money stolen but he had appropriated it to his own use and hence the present proceedings. For the prosecution it was contended that the prisoner having been paid 14/- to convey the money was for the time being a clerk or servant of the treasurer and was liable to be indicted for the offence of disdemeanour. The defence was that part of the money had been contributed by the prisoner and that he was a partner, so to speak, in the union and that he could not be charged with misappropriating his own funds. There was also an answer on the merits of the case. The Bench dismissed the case on the points of law raised.

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Stealing Drink

William Goddard, John Goddard, James Murphy and Thomas Maneill were charged with stealing a bottle and six quarts of ale, the property of Edward Wager of Great Longstone. William Goddard 3 months imprisonment and John Goddard, James Murphy and Thomas Maneill 2 months each.

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The Mining Districts

The growth of the mining districts is strongly illustrated when we take stock, as it were, of the processes established in the ten years ending 1865. Thus in Barnsley there were 11,484 inhabited houses in 1863 as compared to 9,209 in 1854, at Bury 17,188 against 14,801, at Cardiff 14,038, at Chesterfield 14,320 against 11,436, at Darlington 19,685 against 17,614, at Dudley 25,447 against 21,596, at Durham 12,173 against 10,574, at Gateshead 11,605 against 10,289, at Middlesborough 5,403 against 2,752, at Newcastle 27,310 against 21,432, at Sheffield 52,031 against 38,747, at Sunderland 13,398 against 10,269, at Swansea 14,519 against 11,624, at Wigan 16,836 against 13,930 and at Wolverhampton 21,556 against 16,816. The proportion of letters to each inhabitant is also rising showing a higher standard of education and a greater degree of mental and commercial activity. Thus, in Swansea there are 18 letters per head against 10 in 1854, in Sunderland 19 against 13, at Wigan 9 against 6, at Middlesborough 16 against 15, at Darlington 18 against 12, at Barnsley 11 against 10, at Chesterfield 13 against 11 etc. At Cardiff, however, the number of letters have declined having been only 20 per head last year, against 32 in 1854. What has come to the Cardiffites that they write fewer letters though even now they dabble freely in pen and ink?