

He also speaks of difficulty in getting material. The head engineer was his own selection and gave every preference to the work for the Foord pit, even to the sacrifice of the Back pits, from which the market had necessarily to be supplied. Local enquiry would easily prove this. Besides, no opposition was put in the way of getting more fitters, &c., had such men been wanted for the Foord pit. Mr. Wills was sometimes unreasonable in his expectations; he lectured the agent on one occasion before the storekeeper (McK.) for not having material out from England, even before an acknowledgment of the order had come by mail. That he ordered much of the material required is in evidence on Colliery books; the orders are in his own handwriting. He also ordered material for which no order appeared in the office books.

Mr. Wills imputes to the agent base motives. This comes well from a man with such a record. It is strange, believing such possible, he should, in his second engagement, agree to consult and report through him. While, in the first flush of his self-conceit, he claimed that "there were not four men in all England fit to manage the Foord pit," he afterwards acknowledged that the difficulties to be met were greater than he had at first any idea of.

And, having committed himself to rash promises, he tried to put on others the blame of his inability to do impossible things.

It is all very well, in the light of subsequent experience, to speak of mistakes, but it is the lot of very few who attempt risky undertakings to avoid making some, and neither Mr. Wills or the agent's previous records are without them.

Statement presented by H. S. Poole, December 30, 1895.

E. GILPIN, JR.