**5.1. Level of pauperism comparing pitmen with other workers, supplied by J. W. Day, Chairman of the Houghton-le-Spring Poor Law Union, to the 1842 Children’s Employment Commission.**

Note: Miners’ aversion to the Poor Law was well-known, and many mining companies provided some medical care in cases of accident which, along with ‘smart money’ in the North East, and miners’ subscription to Friendly Societies, enabled many to avoid using parochial assistance. However, as these figures show, the parish remained an important source of relief for miners and their families in times of need.

The Union contained about 20,000 people according to 1841 census ‘nearly the whole of which number are connected with the collieries’.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1837 | 1838 | 1839 | 1840 | 1841 |
| Pitmen | Men | 41 | 52 | 54 | 51 | 45 |
| Women | 123 | 130 | 140 | 139 | 129 |
| Children | 262 | 258 | 242 | 253 | 211 |
| TOTAL | 366 | 440 | 436 | 443 | 385 |
| Other Persons | Men | 60 | 85 | 69 | 46 | 54 |
| Women | 179 | 201 | 208 | 196 | 187 |
| Children | 168 | 175 | 199 | 153 | 158 |
| TOTAL | 407 | 470 | 476 | 395 | 399 |
| GRAND TOTAL | 773 | 910  | 912 | 838 | 784 |

Workhouse population: 6 men over 50 of whom 1 is a pitman; 4 women, 3 aged over 50 none of them connected to a pitman and 8 children (4 above and 4 below 10) of which 3 belong to pitmen.

Source: *PP* 1842 (381), *Appendix to the First Report of the Commissioners. Mines. Part 1. Reports and Evidence from Sub-Commissioners*, p.718.