

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

WEDNESDAY, 10TH JULY, 1889 (Hon. W. J. M. LARNACH, Chairman).

Mr. GEORGE JOACHIM, Manager of the Westport Coal Company, examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] This Committee was appointed with the view of getting information in respect of the various coal leases in Westland, and also the conditions under which they are worked; in respect of the number of men employed and the prices charged for coal; also, in respect of tariffs, haulage-rates for conveyance by rail, with royalties charged by the Government, and other particulars connected with the trade: will you also kindly tell the Committee what coal leases are represented by your company, of which you are the manager?—We have leases in the Buller coalfields—at a place known as Waimangaroa, the Coalbrookdale lease, and the Granity Creek lease.

2. The company is partly interested in leases at Greymouth?—The Wallsend. It is the Government leases, I presume, that you want to know about?

3. Are there any other leases?—Yes; we are interested in the Taylorville lease and the Wallsend.

4. Would you be good enough to state the terms of the leases you hold?—On the Buller field they are for ninety-nine years, and 6d. a ton royalty.

5. Does that include freight—railway freight?—No; it is simply royalty.

6. Is it affected by rates of freight at all?—No; it is simply royalty. It is fixed at 6d.

7. Absolutely?—Absolutely.

8. No matter what the quantity?—No matter what the quantity.

9. On large and small coal?—On large and small. In the Greymouth field the leases are for sixty-six years. The majority of them are Government leases. The royalty is 6d. for the first twenty-one years, and 1s. thereafter.

10. How many of the twenty-one years, do you remember, have expired?—About three years.

11. Then the royalty for the next eighteen years will be 6d.?—The Wallsend lease has only about eight years to run.

12. I understood you to say that the leases have only three years unexpired?—The Wallsend lease is an exception. The other leases have been recently renewed. This is one of the original leases, and not renewed.

13. What is the extent of ground?—About a thousand acres. I am sorry that I did not know I was to be examined before this Committee, otherwise I would have brought the necessary data with me; but I think this answer is substantially correct.

14. How many of the leases are being worked by your company?—All, with the exception of one, namely, the Granity Creek. With regard to this one, I may state that the plans for opening it have been already deposited in the Public Works Office, and it will be opened as soon as the state of the harbour-works will warrant the company doing so.

15. Then, it is the intention of your company to open up that lease?—Yes; we have already deposited the necessary plans for the purpose in the Public Works Office.

16. *Mr. Fish.*] Do you pay any rent in addition to the royalty?—Yes; a large rent: we pay £738 on account of Granity Creek, which we get nothing for; the other rent merges in royalty. There is a dead rent fixed on every lease but Granity Creek. In this particular case the rent does not merge into the royalty.

17. That is because you are not taking anything out of it, I presume; but let me ask you what is the rent you are paying under the other leases?—I cannot tell you, but I have no doubt that can be ascertained by reference to the Department of Mines.

18. *The Chairman.*] Do you know what is the number of miners?—We have five hundred at Westport.

19. *Mr. O'Connor.*] You say you do not remember the rents for the other leases?—I do not remember them.

20. *The Chairman.*] How many at the Grey?—I think about a similar number.

21. There work is carried on in conjunction with the mine of Mr. Kennedy?—I think I have mentioned the whole of the mines in which the company is interested.

22. *Mr. Fish.*] Including Kennedy's?—Including Kennedy's.

23. *The Chairman.*] Is there not some arrangement with the Union Steamship Company?—Yes; we have a carrying arrangement with them.

24. Will you state the particulars of that arrangement?—It is simply a carrying arrangement. Rates of freight are fixed from year to year, and even from day to day sometimes; but it never extends beyond the year.

25. What is the existing arrangement for the year?—It is subject to variations from day to day; it terminates on the 31st December.

26. Next?—Yes; but that is information which I scarcely think the Committee is entitled to.