

846. Can you tell when the arrangement was made?—I cannot exactly tell; eighteen months or two years ago; it is some time ago, at any rate.

847. *The Chairman.*] Do you know of the alleged fault in the Brunner Mine?—Yes.

848. That has been known for two or three years?—For much longer than that: seven or eight years.

849. Have you inspected there lately?—I have not been into it lately—at least not for about the last twelve months.

850. *Mr. Hutchison.*] It is suggested that the fact of the existence of a fault is a sufficient dispensation as to the conditions of output of the Brunner Mine?—I do not know that you could put it that way: the Brunner, the Coal-pit Heath, and the Wallsend are worked under one company.

851. We are aware of that, but we do not know at present that there is any arrangement of give and take. I want you to tell us whether this fault in the Brunner Mine is a sufficient excuse for dispensing with output?—No doubt it would be an excuse: I do not know that they have got equally as good a seam at the other side of the fault.

852. *Mr. Guinness.*] Do you not know that the fault was proved?—Yes; coal was got, but the coal was not there so good when it was first opened.

853. *Mr. Hutchison.*] But the quantity?—The quantity was there; but if you cannot get a marketable coal there is no use taking soft coal—coal that was not marketable.

854. Is it coal within the meaning of the lease?—No doubt about its being coal.

855. Is it sufficient to allow of an output of 45,000 tons?—Yes; there was a stipulation as to working provide for. That is the mine in which, I understand, the largest output is stipulated on any of the three leases—Brunner, Coal-pit Heath, Wallsend—twice as much as the Coal-pit Heath and three times as much as Wallsend.

856. *The Chairman.*] You are aware that in this lease there is allowance made if faults are discovered in the working of the mine?—Yes.

857. *Mr. Hutchison.*] When do you inspect these mines?—Generally once in the year.

858. Do you make a report?—Not as a rule on coal-mines.

859. Who does?—Mr. Binns.

860. You say that the Koronui is not worked as their existing lease?—No; it was transferred to the Union Company. The Union Company surrendered, and the Westport Company took up 490 acres of ground held originally by the Koronui.

861. The Koronui lease is no longer in existence; but you say that part of their ground has been taken up by the Westport Company?—Yes.

862. Are you speaking from definite knowledge about the surrender of the Koronui lease?—Yes.

863. The portion that is now leased to the Westport Company in conjunction with other leasehold (numbers 10, 15, and part of 14, as marked on the map): you say they are worked together, and the output over all is sufficient for two?—Yes.

864. *Mr. Feldwick.*] Have you got any information relating to the Mokihinui Mine that has not been spoken of at all?—There are three leases held at Mokihinui—one of 320 acres; that was granted in July, 1885. For the third year there was stipulated 20,000 tons; for the fourth year, 40,000 tons; and for the remainder, 50,000 tons. There has been but little output, and no real work done.

865. *Mr. Withy.*] That is now overdue?—Yes; but they got permission to keep back output pending the formation of the company. They have to get their output yet. Two years were allowed them: of that period there is about ten months to run before they must commence work.

866. Is there railway communication?—It is close to the railway constructed by the Mokihinui Company.

867. The railway would serve both leases?—This 320 acres, I understand, is now proposed to be surrendered, and application has been made for 1,470 acres adjoining, which is all to be put in one lease, to be worked under one company, called the Cardiff Coal Company.

868. *Mr. Feldwick.*] What about the other Mokihinui property?—The Mokihinui Company hold a lease of 160 acres, which was granted in July, 1885. There is a considerable amount of work done on that, but there is no real output from it. The stipulation was—for the third year, 2,000 tons; fourth year, 4,000 tons; and the remainder, 5,000 tons. The Mokihinui Company likewise hold 640 acres at Coal Creek. They have constructed a railway, which cost £25,000, from a point about a mile above the mouth of the Mokihinui River, where they have coal-staiths; it is about four and a half miles, or thereabouts, in length. There is but very little output from that mine. The lease was granted in June, 1888.

869. Is the Mokihinui navigable for large vessels?—No; it would be no good to a coal-mine, as coal could only be taken away with small vessels occasionally. There is generally about 9ft. of water on the bar at spring tides, but sometimes it is less.

870. Where would they go to?—To Westport; that is the only way it can be expected to dispose of a large output of coals from these mines.

871. Then, there would be a very long haulage?—About thirty miles.

872. Who are the shareholders: do you know if Mr. O'Connor is one?—Yes.

873. Is he managing director?—Yes.

874. *Mr. Hutchison.*] One lease is not complied with and the other has not matured?—One is the small lease; the output this year under the small lease would be 4,000 tons.

875. We had a plan here yesterday produced by Mr. Kennedy—it was almost the same as the official map here except for the large amount of amalgamation shown, and it would probably be some years old—can you inform us how so much amalgamation has been brought about?—The history of these coal-mines is this: The mine that Mr. Kennedy formerly held was the first mine taken up and worked: it passed through several hands until Mr. Kennedy became the owner of it.