

anything that would be likely to facilitate its further development : so that any information you can give to the Committee in that respect we shall be glad to receive?—I would be better prepared if I had had any warning that I had to come before this Committee : but it was settled that any questions I would answer would be from the miners' standpoint.

997. *Mr. Feldwick.*] Do you know the Koronui lease?—Yes.

998. Can you tell the Committee why the working of that lease was abandoned?—There were rumours prevalent that it would not pay. I do not know whether that is true. I have also heard that the Westport Company can work a good portion of the Koronui lease from their present mine.

999. You are aware that the tramway was taken up?—Yes.

1000. Where was the tramway transferred to?—I think the Westport Company got the rails and machinery.

1001. If that mine was being worked, would there be a larger number of men employed?—Yes ; if the work was being carried out.

1002. Then, you think the amalgamation of the mines reduced the number of men?—The manager says that if the mine were working there would be a corresponding less number of men employed on the Denniston Hill.

1003. *Mr. Fish.*] You have no personal knowledge that that is so?—No.

1004. Except that if they could sell more coal it would be better for the men?—Yes ; but the company can at present supply the demand from the mine now in operation.

1005. *Mr. Withy.*] When they took the railway from the Koronui Mine, was it because there was not any longer a good approach?—It was the only approach they had from the railway. They could lower a good number of tons on the incline, but they considered the expense of working back over the top of the hill to the dip-coal was too much ; they had to work over the hill and bring the coal down again.

1006. Are they at the present time tapping that coal from below?—No, not at present ; the two leases are very close to one another. At present they are working on the Denniston Hill ; the workings are round by the back, on a lower level than the top of the Koronui was. If they worked the Koronui from Denniston they could work at a lower level.

1007. By going in a new way?—On the other side.

1008. Does that appear to be a reasonable contention on the part of the owners?—I do not know that it is a contention : it is only a rumour. When the Koronui stopped there was a meeting to protest against the closing up of the mine, for they considered that the Westport Company, according to the conditions of the lease, should keep the Koronui open.

1009. Were any conditions offered by the mine manager?—Not that I am aware of.

1010. Had the men who were working there to move to other places?—Some came to Denniston and some went to other places.

1011. Was it, in your opinion, desirable to leave?—I could not say.

1012. *Mr. Guinness.*] Do you know whether, when the Westport Company bought the Koronui Mine, they did not surrender the lease, and get a new lease?—I could not say whether they surrendered the lease, but I believe that recently they got an extension of their present lease in the direction of the Koronui lease.

1013. *Mr. Feldwick.*] It has been said that 500 men are or have been lately employed in the Westport mines?—No ; 150 less than that number.

1014. How many in the Coalbrookdale?—It is not opened up yet.

1015. It is a portion of the Westport Company's lease?—Yes.

1016. How many men are employed?—360.

1017. Actual miners?—No ; these are all employed in and about the mines.

1018. How many miners?—About 250 to 280.

1019. Is it true that the Granity Creek and the Westport join?—No, they do not.

1020. Then, the Granity Creek cannot be worked from the present workings?—No ; but they have made the survey to work Granity Creek.

1021. What is the distance between the two leases?—Six or seven miles.

1022. *Mr. Guinness.*] There is only one mine at work in Westport, although you speak of two — the Denniston and Coalbrookdale?—There is no Coalbrookdale.

1023. What do you call it?—We call the mine the Denniston Mine belonging to the Westport Company. The Coalbrookdale is only a portion of the present mine ; it is a portion of the present lease they are working : it is what we call a section : there is a tramway being made.

1024. *Mr. Fish.*] Then, what is called the Coalbrookdale and the other mine are practically one?—Yes.

1025. And so if they are working one they are working the other?—Yes ; but there is a difference in the thickness of the seam ; there is a Banbury seam—the Coalbrookdale seam.

1026. *Mr. Guinness.*] But from the mine it all comes through one tunnel?—Yes.

1027. *Mr. Feldwick.*] Are you acquainted with the rates of wages at Westport and at Newcastle?—I have worked at both places. There is very little difference in the wages paid to the coal-hewers. There is a difference in the wages of day-men in Newcastle and that paid to day-men by the Westport Company.

1028. What is the difference?—Day-men get 10s., whereas in New South Wales the rate is 7s. and 8s. for men working outside in connection with coal-mines.

1029. *Mr. Fish.*] But the cost of living is dearer at Westport?—Oh, yes ; but the rate of wages is somewhere about equal for coal-miners. In some parts of Newcastle district they are paid more than in Westport and other places. The district rate in Newcastle is 4s. 2d. There is a difference in the work in some places, which makes the difference in the rate of wages. In some places where the coal is harder to get they get more than where the coal is easy to get.

1030. What is the rate for hewing coal with you?—2s. 10d. gross weight.