

1031. For round coal?—No; that is just as you get it. They were getting 3s. 10d. for screened coal, but we found that did not pay us, and we went back to 2s. 10d. gross weight.

1032. What would the cost of the coal be at the pit-mouth?—I could not form an estimate; there is a lot of things to take into consideration—cost of haulage, trucking timbering to keep the roof up, the cost of men to lay the roads.

1033. You would consider that outside your function?—I have no means of getting at it.

1034. Would the statement be correct that it was 11s. to be put on board ship?—I have heard that it is 11s.

1035. Do you know what they charge at Denniston for coal?—I could not say; the miners get it for nothing, and they are nearly all miners there; there are a few publicans and storekeepers. I think they pay 12s. for it, but I am not sure.

1036. *Mr. Guinness.*] As to the method in which this mine is worked, have you anything to say to that?—No; I have nothing to say against the method in which it is worked.

1037. With regard to the machinery, is there proper supervision and inspection?—I think so.

1038. Every precaution is taken with respect to the lives of the men?—Yes; specially in the mine. I do not know for outside of the mine: In the mine I know there is every care taken.

1039. With regard to ventilation?—Yes; we have liberty to appoint two of our number to go round and inspect the mine every month. The ventilation of a mine might be right to-day but bad a month hence. We have had occasion sometimes to grumble, but every time the matter was explained to our satisfaction. The reports vary; sometimes it is bad in certain sections. The manager knows that.

1040. *Mr. Withy.*] Is there anything that affects the working of the whole mine—any hindrance to the proper development of it?—I know of no hindrance; but I would not like to see one company working all the leases in the district. That would go against the working-man.

1041. Do not the Westport Company hold the lease on certain conditions?—I do not know what the conditions are; but I think they should open the Granity Creek lease. If the mines are worked by one company, and a man is discharged from one mine, he will be discharged from employment altogether. It would be better if these leases were opened by separate companies.

1042. *Mr. Feldwick.*] Would this railway from the Westport coal leases join the Granity Creek?—There is a branch line on the Waimangaroa River by which the present mine is worked.

1043. The Government line extends to the Ngakawau River?—Yes.

1044. The Ngakawau River section of the Government line is comparatively little used?—It has been closed until recently. They have continued the line to the Ngakawau River. Until six months ago the terminus was a mile and a half from the river. Since the Ngakawau started the line is extended to their works.

1045. Is the Ngakawau a private company?—Yes.

1046. That makes two separate companies?—Yes.

1047. Then, there is the Mokihinui?—That is just opening up: the line has not been extended to there.

1048. The only line the Westport Company have been using for all the traffic is that to Waimangaroa, the nine miles beyond that is partly lying useless?—Yes.

1049. It passes the Granity Creek lease, which the Westport Company hold?—Yes.

1050. Another seven miles would take it to Mokihinui: so that the building of that line would bring in another separate company?—Yes.

1051. Do you know the Mokihinui Mine?—No; I have not been in it.

1052. Is the quality of the coal good?—Yes; the quality is very good.

GEORGE ALFRED ANSELL examined.

1053. *The Chairman.*] You come from Greymouth?—Yes.

1054. Have you any official position in connection with the coal trade?—I am Chairman of the Grey Valley Miners' Association.

1055. Where are your head-quarters: near Greymouth?—At Brunnerton.

1056. At the mines?—Yes.

1057. You are intimately acquainted with the mines at present in work, and which have been at work there for a number of years?—I have been employed there for the past five or six years.

1058. Is it your business to go down the mines at present?—Unfortunately I have been "off" with a broken leg until lately. I have been unable to work again only for the last six or eight months.

1059. The Committee have been informed that of the three mines in your locality the Coal-pit Heath and the Wallsend are working about equal time; but there is the Tyneside Mine, is that under the Grey Valley Company?—Yes.

1060. Are you aware that there is a connection between the two mines—the Coal-pit Heath and the Wallsend—under the river?—There can be no connection between one side of the river and the other at the present time; it would take some months before any communication could be made.

1061. Are they working under the river?—Yes; there are workings under the river at the present time.

1062. Can you tell us what basis you have for that statement?—The basis is a colliery explosion that occurred some time ago. I examined the mine, and they found that a tunnel was extended under the river-bed in the direction of Taylorville. Coal-pit Heath is on the Taylorville side; the Wallsend is on the other side. From my own experience, knowing the position of the shaft, I am aware that a tunnel extends under there.

1063. Being driven for the purpose of accommodation?—I cannot say that it has been driven for the purpose of accommodation. As a practical miner, I should think they were endeavouring to get