

42. The amount it realised was £4,500?—No; the £4,500 applies to the Mokihinui Mine.

43. What did your property bring?—It was simply seized—it was taken over by the Government. According to C.-9, 1901, £7,516 2s. 11d. is the total value set down for the plants of the Westport-Cardiff Mine, valued in the report of Messrs. Gordon, McKay, Hayes, and Jameson. I submit that, the Government having bought the Mokihinui Mine for £4,500, the opportunity of paying themselves presented itself. They may have paid themselves—I cannot say, because I am in the dark—but if they did pay themselves they should now give an explanation.

44. Where does the connection come in?—It is charged against us as the Westport-Ngakawau Railway Extension deficiency. We can prove that, in the matter of the conditions, we fulfilled ours, and there was no deficiency so far as we were concerned. Unfortunately, however, the Mokihinui Company did not do so well, and they contributed nothing.

45. And the whole of the deficiency was charged against you?—The balance of that deficiency was charged against us. There was a greater deficiency, as a matter of fact; but they reduced it, and brought it down to £2,107.

46. *Mr. J. Duncan.*] The £2,107 would be your share?—This deficiency is in the items charged against us.

47. What are you claiming?—I say, in terms of my petition, that in all fairness we should receive some consideration for the value of our property. When I appeared before the Committee in 1903 I submitted a statement claiming a larger amount, but I now, in seeking some equitable adjustment, word my petition in this way: "That your petitioner, who was the original promoter of the company, and first lessee of part of the land mined, has never relinquished his feeling and belief that, in view of the circumstances under which the Government took possession of the mine and property, the shareholders were justly entitled at least to consideration for excess in value of plant taken, as shown by the valuers of the Government—viz., £7,516 3s. 11d., plus £1,000 as the value of prospecting-works, and also the value of the telephone-line, £278 3s. 9d.—in all, £8,794 7s. 8d.—as against the claim of the Government against the company for £4,470." Now, being compelled to come before the Committee again, I ask the Committee to look into the matter of the £2,107, part of that amount of £4,470.

48. *Hon. Mr. R. McKenzie.*] You mean, plus that amount?—I would make it plus that amount, but you see my difficulty.

49. *Mr. J. Duncan.*] In the minutes of evidence taken in 1908 you were asked, "You consider your claim is a moral and equitable one?" and you replied "Yes. We wish to be treated exactly on the same lines as other companies have been treated—the Point Elizabeth and Mokihinui companies. As a matter of fact, the Government need not have paid the Point Elizabeth Company a cent, but the company received £21,000 and the promoter £1,500. As the promoter of the Westport-Cardiff Company, I have not asked for a penny so far." The next question is, "You claim, then, that the Government is treating your company differently from other companies, seeing that it made concessions to those companies?" Your answer is "Yes." You were then asked, "That is what you base your claim on?" and your reply is "Yes"?—That is so.

50. You look upon it as a merely equitable one, not a legal one?—Yes. You will notice that I appealed to the Minister of Mines and also to the Minister of Justice.

51. In question 37 you were asked, "I suppose you do not dispute the fact that the Government, in what they have done, have acted legally?"—I do not dispute that.

52. You wish to be treated exactly the same as the other companies?—Yes, and because the mine is now paying.

53. *Mr. J. C. Thomson.*] I understand there are two companies referred to, the Westport-Cardiff Company and the Mokihinui Coal Company. You decided on your own motion to open up these coal-mines, and I suppose you approached the Government and came to some arrangement with regard to the railway?—I approached the Government and asked it to purchase the Mokihinui Company's railway, and the Government did.

54. I want to know who took the initiative in this matter. There were two coal companies, and you must at one time or other have approached the Government and asked it to do something?—We asked the Government to construct a railway, or extend the railway now at Ngakawau.

55. The Government did not make the proposition to you?—No.

56. The companies asked the Government to construct the railway?—No; we were part of the whole of the public.

57. The public of New Zealand did not move in the matter. We are studying the interests of the taxpayers of New Zealand, and not those of a particular district?—Yes.

58. Those two companies approached the Government and asked it to do certain things. The Government was brought into this matter by representations made to it?—Yes.

59. Very well; by the default of another company you, representing the Westport-Cardiff Coal Company, have been landed in a very bad position, but the Government is in no way responsible for the default of the other company?—That is so.

60. The Government must have had some agreement as to who should pay if there was any loss?—No; there was no agreement.

61. You say the other company had preferential treatment from the Government inasmuch as the Government paid them a certain sum?—The preferential treatment I referred to was that in connection with the Mokihinui Company.

62. You say the company had preferential treatment, and, although you have no legal claim, you come to this Committee asking it to recommend your case because there is a moral right?—The preferential treatment I referred to was in connection with the Point Elizabeth Company.

63. You say you wish to be treated in the same manner as the Mokihinui Company?—Yes, that would be correct. They paid nothing, and we have been charged with the deficiency of £2,107.