

## MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

THURSDAY, 4TH NOVEMBER, 1909.

THOMAS BORKIN examined. (No. 1.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your name?—Thomas Borkin.
2. What position do you hold?—I am a miner.
3. You hold some official position on the West Coast, do you not?—President of the Rimu Miners' Association.
4. That is not a miners' union?—No, it is an association.
5. What is the object of the association?—Just to develop the gold-mining industry.
6. It does not consist entirely of miners?—No. It is mostly composed of miners, but includes residents who bring forward mining matters.
7. *Mr. Anderson.*] It is composed of working miners and master miners?—Working miners. There are no master miners.
8. *The Chairman.*] It also includes business people?—It consists of all who are interested in mining in the district.
9. *Mr. Scott.*] There are members of the association who are not miners?—Yes; there is nothing to debar any one from joining.
10. *Mr. Anderson.*] It is not capitalistic?—No; it is simply formed for the purpose of prospecting.
11. *The Chairman.*] You have come up from the Coast in order to give evidence on a petition before the Committee?—That is so.
12. Are you one of those who signed the petition?—Yes.
13. I think you had better in the first place make a statement with regard to the Water-power Regulations and the statements made in the petition, and then members of the Committee will question you on any matters you have not dealt with?—Yes.
14. Will you make a statement?—I think I will be able to explain the position in my own way. Down in the Rimu district we have an area of country where the mining possibilities are very big in comparison with the Kumara goldfields, where there were about 640 acres. That district has maintained a population for some twenty-five years of about fourteen or fifteen hundred people on an average engaged in mining. I am just taking it as a matter of comparison between the Kumara and the Rimu field. In Rimu we have an area of 6,000 acres, as against about 640 in Kumara. We have only fifty miners employed at the present time at Rimu.
15. *Mr. Anderson.*] Is Rimu affected by the petition?—Yes, it is the chief place. Out of the 6,000 acres, a syndicate proposes to generate power to bring water for 800 acres in prospecting licenses, and it is arranged that they will have to sell the water to individual parties who wish to take up claims in the remaining portion of the 6,000 acres. That would mean that the population of our district would be increased to that extent. Now we come to the unfair discrimination of the hydro-electric system for bringing water to the fields, and the system of gravitation. If water can be brought on to the field by the gravitation system, the miners can simply apply to the Warden and get a grant under an ordinary license; and if water from the To Aroha Cañon, where they seek to develop this power, could be siphoned to the field, it could be brought under the ordinary mining license.
16. *Mr. Seddon.*] How much is that?—Half-a-crown for the license.
17. How much per head?—The Government offered £15,000 subsidy to any party which would bring water on to the field.
18. *The Chairman.*] How long ago is that?—A few years ago. About ten or twelve years ago, I think. It seems to me to be a rather incomprehensible state of affairs that the development of the Ross Flats has been considered to be of such importance as to warrant the granting of a subsidy of £15,000, together with the free right of water to generate power. That is only an ordinary mining development. The development that we hope to make in Rimu is of infinitely more importance than that at Ross Flat. We consider it is significant that, although four or five months have elapsed since the Water Regulations were gazetted, no effort has been made except this pioneer movement started down our way.
19. But a subsidy of £15,000 was offered some years ago?—Yes.
20. A pound-for-pound subsidy?—No, not a pound-for-pound subsidy—it is the same as the Ross.
21. But it is significant that that was not taken up?—This was a gravitation system. They knew nothing about this hydro-electric system. There is no water high enough for the gravitation system. I do not know that there is anything else I can say except I am asked questions.
22. That is all you have to say, but you would like to answer questions?—Yes.
23. *Mr. Scott.*] Your people or company are making application for a certain number of heads, are you not?—I am not interested in any company. It is simply for the benefit of the people where I am living that I am here.
24. Is your association making any application for any rights?—No.
25. This water that you wish to make use of is for the benefit of yourselves as individuals?—Yes.
26. Not for the benefit of any company?—Yes.