

53. Do you think it would benefit the country to give a monopoly of the water in return for the employment of a hundred and fifty men?—I do not understand the application of the word "monopoly" here, because it appears to me that no one else requires the concession, and there is no competition for it. It is a grant to a party.

54. Supposing the right were given to that company to take water out of the river, and some five or ten years after some other person wants to start an industry there, do you think it is right for the Government to give this company this right and refuse it to others?—The same argument might be applied to a mining property of any kind, and I can only say that, if the Government grants a right to that water to one party, it cannot grant it to any one else. If it grants a portion I do not see how it can be a monopoly so long as it is benefitting the country, unless it is in a general sense. Everything that a man has is a monopoly.

55. Supposing a man got all the land, would it not be called a "monopoly," even supposing he had thirty or fifty men?—Yes, you can call it a "monopoly" when there is no other available. But the district is well supplied with rivers capable of giving water-power. The only thing is that we cannot get them on reasonable terms.

56. *Hon. Mr. R. McKenzie.* You are referring to a company, and a company applying for water-rights for mining purposes: do you know that there is no company in existence?—As I understand it, it is a promoting syndicate.

57. Do you know who they are?—I know some of them.

58. Let us see who you think they are?—Well, as near as I can get them there is, of course, the engineer, Mr. Parham, Mr. Michel—I have forgotten the names of two gentlemen in Wellington—and there is our friend here, Mr. Seddon—his name also appears on the list—Dr. Teichelmann, John Evans, and H. Linklater.

59. Who is he?—He is a miner at Stafford.

60. Is that all?—I never took a list of them.

61. Are you in it yourself?—No.

62. Who is the president of your Miners' Association?—Thomas Borkin.

63. Is he in it?—Not that I know of.

64. You say there is a company applying for water for mining purposes?—A promoting syndicate.

65. For mining purposes?—Yes.

66. That is not the company the regulations are dealing with, because it does not say anything about people applying for water for mining purposes. People who apply for water for mining purposes get it for nothing; they apply to the Warden?—Yes.

67. They have applied to the Warden for 300 heads, have they not—the syndicate that holds about 800 acres of land?—Yes.

68. So far as the Government or Ministers are concerned there was no objection to them getting that 300 heads of water for nothing?—So far as I understand it, it could not be obtained in the manner they were applying for it.

69. Out of the Hokitika River they applied to the Warden for 300 heads of water for mining purposes: do you know anything about that?—I have seen the plans, and the spot where it is to be elevated; but I do not know that they were going to lift 300 heads, although they applied for it.

70. Have you ever heard that the Government have objected to them getting it for nothing?—No.

71. So far as the company applying for water for mining purposes is concerned, there has been no objection so far as you know?—No.

72. Coming to water for generating electricity, they applied for sufficient to generate about 20,000-horse power: have you any idea of what power that is?—I am not an electrical engineer, and cannot go into that. The only thing I can go by is by what I have been told.

73. Probably you have a fairly good idea of what a 20-horse-power engine will do?—Yes.

74. Suppose you multiply that to 20,000?—Yes.

75. Supposing you had a thousand-horse-power engine, have you any idea of what its value would be?—No.

76. Can you tell me how many horse-power is used in the whole of Westland at the present time, or in the whole of Canterbury?—No.

77. Coming to the charges for this horse-power, the amount is 3s. a year per horse-power: can you give the Committee any idea of what it would cost to run an engine developing 20-horse power in the year, and running it by coal to generate steam?—No; I look at it from a very different standpoint altogether.

78. I am looking at it from the standpoint of power?—It is scarcely any use asking me any questions about power. If this concession is not granted, the district will go hungry. If we go into the actual value for pumping, no one will look at it.

79. You say you do not think this is a monopoly. Now, these people have applied for water-rights to generate about 20,000-horse power—to generate electricity over the whole geological area of Westland. Supposing they had a monopoly, do you not think that is giving them a very big concession?—I do not see the concession, because if you permit them to convey their electricity to other parts they have to apply for the land first. They have not got from the Totara River to the Ararua River granted to them as a claim. I am not speaking of the possibility of their working ground in that area.

80. This has nothing to do with working ground. They are applying for water-rights to generate electricity to use for any purpose?—In that case I would suggest it would be a wise thing in future, when any one wanted water for installing electrical energy, to get it and divert it to anything else.