

stone face, their thickness in descending order being $2\frac{1}{2}$ ft., $7\frac{1}{2}$ ft., 3 ft., and 8 ft. About a mile farther up the Mokau two more seams are exposed in the bank of the river, their thickness being 5 ft. and $5\frac{1}{2}$ ft. respectively. Some two years ago these seams were worked by a Mr. Stockman, but on account of the obstruction of the Native owners of the land very little was done to develop the coal. From what I could learn the total output of this mine was about 100 tons of coal, which is said to be equal to the Grey coal for steaming purposes. Several parties hold Native leases of coal-areas in the Mokau, but the New Plymouth Coal-mining Company are the only one working their coal at present. Their lease is situated on the north side of the river, and extends from the Mangakawhia to the Mangangarongaro, having a river frontage of about a mile and a half, with coal showing for most of the distance. The mouth of their main drive, which is about 150 ft. long, is situated about 3 chains from the Mokau River on the Mangangarongaro Creek. The coal is conveyed from the mine to a shoot on the bank of the Mokau by means of a wooden tramway.

The coal-seams in the Mokau lie very flat and rise to the north-north-east into sound dry ground, and, with a deep-water channel to the outcrop, offer exceptional facilities for working to advantage." And with regard to the quality of the coal: "These are glance coals, are tender, and do not cake; burn well, leaving a white ash. They have the appearance of bituminous coals, but are largely hydrous." From your knowledge, would you consider that a fairly accurate description of the minerals on the block—and I want the Committee to understand that this refers not only to the block in question, but to the adjoining block which is also held by the company?—You put the question with regard to the minerals?

26. I am speaking now of the coal?—I think that description is very fair. I took a lot to London and had a test made of it there. You can go back from the river eighteen miles, to the nearest point to the market, and see the same seams of coal.

The Chairman: Do you wish the Committee to infer, Mr. Massey, that that report is a report on coal on the Mokau Block? It has nothing to do with the seams on that bank. They are on the opposite side of the river.

Witness: I understand that I am giving evidence and not the Chairman. If he is giving evidence I had better retire.

The Chairman: You will have to conduct yourself properly before the Committee, Mr. Jones. You admitted yesterday, Mr. Massey, that you do not know the block?

Mr. Massey: Quite so; though it seems now that Mr. Lang and I travelled over three or four miles of it some years ago when going from Te Kuiti to Waitara.

The Chairman: What I want cleared up is this: What you are reading does not refer to a part of the Mokau Block.

Mr. Massey: But the connection is this: Mr. Jones gave evidence to the effect that the seams to which this report refers also go right through to the other side of the river.

Witness: If I am to be contradicted and stopped it will be better to tell me to leave the room. That gentleman said it had nothing to do with the seams on the south bank.

The Chairman: If you do not conduct yourself properly, Mr. Jones, I shall ask the Committee to deal with you.

Witness: I shall retire without being asked.

Mr. Massey: I think, Mr. Jones, you should finish your evidence.

Witness: I have a perfect right not to be contradicted, and I will not be. I will let the country know it, if not you. It was the same before the A to L Committee. I say that those seams are on my side of the river, and that this report refers to them.

The Chairman: Then answer the question in that way.

Witness: I am not going to be contradicted. The Chairman has no right to do that.

[Mr. Jones left the room, but presently returned accompanied by Mr. Massey.]

Witness: I have returned, gentlemen, at the request of Mr. Massey. If the Chairman wants to give evidence let him go into the box.

The Chairman: You must desist from that conduct.

Witness: If you are going to insult me any more I shall go away.

The Chairman: I will not tolerate this from you. I will leave myself in the hands of the Committee.

Mr. Massey: I think you had better be satisfied with answering the questions, Mr. Jones.

Witness: Well, then, let me answer.

27. *Mr. Massey:* Will you tell us something about the limestone-deposits?—The limestone-deposits on the block are almost beyond limit.

28. Have you any evidence to offer in the way of reports on the limestone-deposits on your block?—Yes.

29. Have you got them with you?—Yes, sir. I have got them somewhere among my papers here. I will produce reports from the highest authorities in England and New Zealand.

30. As to the block on the other side of the river, can you give the Committee any information with regard to the persons who hold the leases from the Natives? Are they the same, or practically the same, individuals who now own what was Mr. Jones's block?—They are the Palmerston crowd.

31. You mean the Mokau Land and Estate Company?—Yes.

32. They have a lease of the block on the other side of the river?—About 14,000 acres, I think it is.

33. It is coal-bearing country also?—Yes, there is coal on it.

34. Is the coal being worked at all?—I am not too sure about that.

35. You are only certain of the fact that there is coal there?—Yes.

36. And plenty of it?—Yes.

37. Is the position this: that a company holding those two blocks of coal-bearing country have practically a monopoly of the coal-bearing deposits on the west coast of the Taranaki Provincial District?—I fancy there is a little coal in Kawhia, but it is not of this quality.