

147. Can you not give the Committee an approximate idea of the amount? I have not seen the accounts. When I state fourteen or fifteen men, that is as near as I can go.

148. When did the Albion Company take over the property from the original proprietors? I cannot say. I could say roughly, but not precisely.

149. *Mr. O'Conor.*] The work done by the company was the employment of these men. That was the expense they were put to? Yes, and the providing of cargo boats and other things.

150. These boats are decked over, are they not? I believe that there are two boats decked together.

151. *Mr. Sheehan.*] Have you any idea of the amount spent by the original proprietors? No further than their own statement. I do not remember to have seen the accounts, although I believe they offered to show me the accounts.

152. What was the amount they represented to you as having been spent upon the river? The sum of £2,000 was stated to have been the total expenditure, which they adhered to.

153. Is that the total expenditure upon both the river and the mine? £2,000 was what the Albion Company paid them for their expenses.

154. That was the total for both the river and the mine? That was the sum, £2,000, paid for the mine.

155. You have rented the ground? Yes.

156. Have you seen upon the river itself evidence of any expenditure having been made at all equal to that sum? That is a very difficult matter to say, especially when you consider that there is a deal of deep water, and deep-water blasting required. I can say that a very considerable amount has been spent on the river before the Albion Company took it in hand.

157. Had any considerable expenditure taken place upon the mine or the management of the concern apart from the clearing of the river? The coal produced cost 4s. 9d. per ton. They got 10s. for it, which was considered to have covered the expense of working and the other expenses of the mine, and part of the other expenses in the construction of wharfs and shoots, the clearing of the river, and for other purposes. In the statement which I made I did not intend to say that the £2,000 was expended exclusively upon the improvement of the river.

158. Was there no estimate made at the time the company took over the property from the original proprietors as to what proportion of the £2,000 had been spent upon the improvement of the river? No, I never heard of any.

159. You have stated that you cannot furnish the Committee with an approximate estimate of the amount spent by the Albion Company up to the date you gave your evidence? I do not believe I could remember the amount at this length of time. I cannot tell what was the cost of the plant.

160. At the time you took over the property from the original proprietors, what proportion of the total expenditure had been incurred in improving the navigation of the river; I mean what basis have you for your estimate that £1,600 or £2,000 was spent in improving the navigation of the river? From what I had seen done before the Albion Company took the thing in hand, and from what I knew the Albion Company to have done since taking it in hand.

161. *Mr. O'Conor.*] Do you remember being at the Buller and having a meeting there? Yes.

162. Do you remember on that occasion whether or not you stated anything about engaging workmen to clear the harbour at the Ngakawau? I do not remember saying.

163. What I want is to fix the date when the Albion Company took over the mine? The Albion Company commenced about the date you speak of; about the date of that meeting.

164. Before or after? I took the foreman down with me at that time. There were some men on before that. I had got a manager from the Thames, and others arrived afterwards. I had an out-door or river manager I knew, and he had commenced with work upon the river.

165. Have you no idea of the date when that meeting took place? You have got the date there, I presume.

166. Would it be two days before that meeting that the property was taken over by the Company? I recollect I brought down a mining manager. I think the manager left Nelson about August 6th.

167. When were the boats purchased and removed to the river? About that time; the time the meeting took place.

168. Did the boats leave Westport before you left there? No; the weather was bad, and they were detained.

169. Did the men to work these boats leave previous to that? I think they did. They travelled overland.

170. Are you in a position to state that the work was commenced previous to your leaving Westport on the 22nd August? I was not there then, and I have not been since.

171. Did you visit the Ngakawau previous to purchasing the interest of the old company on behalf of the Albion Company: had you visited the claim previously? Yes; I did.

172. Were you there in January or February, 1873? I do not know. I think I was there later.

173. Did you see any work going on? I saw that a great deal of work had been done on the river.

174. Are you aware that the Provincial Government spent money on the river? I am not.

Mr. W. BERRY present and examined.

175. *The Chairman.*] You took the evidence of Mr. Beetham before the Colonial Industries Committee? Yes.

176. Are you satisfied of the accuracy of your report? Yes. I may say that in taking down such a statement as Mr. Beetham's, a mistake may be made in figures, although I never remember making such a mistake as shown by the correction. If those who were present, and can speak from memory, say that the amount was not as originally written, then I must have mistaken Mr. Beetham's utterance.