

lock-out took place, and consequently the terms of engagement of new hands and of re-engagement of old hands were, after six months at daily wages equivalent to the full concession formerly required by the company being agreed to by the strikers, and at the same time all interference on their part between the company and the customers to whom they sold coal was withdrawn.

34. That during these negotiations with the miners they requested the company not to impose this condition of delaying the introduction of the tonnage-rate for six months, but to grant them employment at once on the reduced tonnage-rates in lieu of days' wages at 12s., and that this was agreed to by the company.

35. That this fact indicates very clearly that the reduction of 20 per cent. required by the company in July was reasonable and just, and would still have left the coal-hewers more than 12s. per day.

36. That, whilst the lock-out on the 19th July was because of the loss incurred through an increase of the cost of hewing by the change of system on the 10th March, 1890, and whilst it continued as already described to the 30th August, quite as many men paid by the day as the coal-hewers paid by the ton were thrown out of employment, and, as these had no interest whatever in the dispute, their earnings were sacrificed by the quarrel of the miners, without any prospect of benefit to themselves.

37. That thus, because of arbitrary instructions issued by the Maritime Council in Dunedin, with which body the A.M.L.A. was affiliated, the lock-out of the 19th July was no sooner terminated on the 30th August than conditions were imposed which were not in the interests either of the company or of the men, and which resulted in a strike on the 20th September, and threw out of employment nearly five hundred hewers and wages-men because of a principle which, in our opinion, could not be of benefit to any interests in the Grey Valley.

38. That the remuneration of the coal-hewers was sufficient has also been confirmed by evidence which the Commissioners obtained, and they would refer to a return put in by Mr. Robinson, a miner, in which the manager of the company states that the earnings of the men averaged 14s. 8d. per day, and to the evidence of Mr. Robinson criticizing that statement, and representing the drawbacks from that amount which the miners desired him to claim as reasonable, and which amounted only to 4d. per day.

39. That the men had at the time opportunity afforded them of examining the company's pay-sheets, and satisfying themselves of the accuracy of statement published; but, powder and fuse having been taken into account therein, they found no other fault with it than that their weekly payments for doctor, accident fund, and sundry minor charges amounted, as above, to 4d. per day. The Commissioners also during their inquiries had access to the company's pay-sheets, and satisfied themselves that the rates of remuneration were as stated by the manager.

40. That the Commissioners, having intimated by repeated advertisement in the local newspapers that they were prepared to receive evidence from all parties interested in the subjects to be inquired into, and having specially addressed the secretary of the A.M.L.A., forwarding a copy of the Commission and a memorandum of matters on which they wished to receive evidence, found throughout their sittings that no evidence was offered by the miners bearing on the subject of the application for a reduction of royalty or railage, and that on directly asking some of them touching this question they appeared to have no valid reasons for urging the Commissioners to recommend such an important concession.

41. That Mr. Newton, one of the delegates who made the application to Government for a reduction of royalty or railage, did not avail himself of the invitation to proffer evidence to the Commissioners on that or any other subject relating thereto.

42. That the Commissioners proceeded to Westport and Denniston, and there took the evidence of Mr. Lomas, president of the A.M.L.A., and specially asked him what reasons could be urged in favour of the application, but had from