

87. How do you deal with the Anchor Company under this agreement?—The Anchor Company has been always made an exception to this agreement.

88. Were any others exempted? How did you supply the "Lawrence" and "Stormbird"?—During the strike period, of course, as manager, I considered that the agreement with the Union Steamship Company was suspended until they were fit to resume it again.

89. How, in the ordinary course of business, did these outsiders get coal?—They used to get it by arrangement with the Union Company.

90. Does the "Murray" ever coal here?—Yes; all the Anchor boats get it without restriction. They work in harmony with one another. The "Stormbird" belongs to Messrs. Seager and party. Supposing they wanted to come here with a cargo of cattle freight—this is only occasionally, it does not pay to come empty—they arrange with the Union Company to get coal freights to suitable ports.

91. The "Lawrence" belongs to the Mokihinui Coal Company?—She would not come here except in strike time.

92. The next point is, whether the men went out under this arrangement. You say there were only one-third of the men at work. How many would that represent?—At this time there would be about a hundred and fifty men in work.

93. *Mr. Brown.*] What is the full complement?—Four hundred and fifty men. They, the hundred and fifty, used to work alternately up to the end of September.

94. *The Chairman.*] And then what happened?—The Union Company, by virtue of their agreement, demanded to have all the coal shipped by them. Then, in loading the steamer "Brunner," the miners left off work.

95. And since this they have not resumed?—No.

96. That, then, is the whole narrative of what has taken place since your letter?—Yes.

97. And what you have stated is the cause of the present strike?—Yes.

98. *Mr. Brown.*] Then, it is not the same difficulty alluded to on the 16th July—in fact, that one was actually settled, and the cause of the present strike was the loading of the "Brunner"?—Yes.

99. *The Chairman.*] Can you give us any account of the history of the leases, the transfers, and the different amalgamations of mines? There is a parliamentary paper here that might assist you. How long have you been connected with this coal-mining district?—I have been connected with the Brunner Mine since 1874. My arrival in the district was in 1865.

100. When did you first acquire an interest in the coal-mines?—My first interest was in June, 1874, in the Brunner Mine lease.

101. What was the arrangement?—I purchased the interest of the then lessees—Messrs. Croaker, Hughes, and McCarthy.

102. Did you then constitute the Brunner Coal-mining Company?—Yes. I was really the individual owner. In 1879 I resumed from the company.

103. *Mr. Brown.*] Was this company a limited liability company? Under what form was it run?—At that time it was under seven names, but they were only nominal shareholders. After that I took over all the interests—in 1879.

104. Up to what time did this continue?—I was sole owner until August, 1888, when my interest was joined with the other mines, under the name of the Grey Valley Coal-mining Company.

105. *The Chairman.*] Can you tell us anything about the Coal-pit Heath Mine?—I only know of it as a neighbour, but I have had no connection with it.

106. Who originally took up the Coal-pit Heath Company?—There was a private owner I think at first named Mr. Taylor, and then it was granted to the company in 1875, and then transferred to the Westport Company in 1887. It was surrendered and a new lease granted in January, 1889. It incurs dead-rent and double royalty after twenty-one years.

107. You know, as a matter of fact, that it was transferred to the Westport Company?—Well, no. All I can tell you is this: that there was an agreement on the part of the Westport Company to transfer it to the Grey Valley Coal Company.

108. On what date was the agreement made to transfer it to the Grey Valley Coal Company?—In August, 1888.

109. What was agreed to be transferred? Was the lease subsequent to the application for surrender and reissue?—Yes.

110. Then the new lease was not granted to the Westport Company, was it?—I am not very clear whether it stands in the name of the Westport Company or the Grey Valley. I think it is in the name of the Westport Company yet, but there was an agreement to transfer.

111. Do you know the history of the Grey coal reserves? Is part of that reserve now owned by the Grey Valley Company?—Yes. I was one of the parties who took it up first.

112. And the Wallsend Mine you originally took up?—I was one of the promoters of the company that first obtained a lease of that.

113. In what year?—I think it would be in 1874. That lease originally was, I think, for forty-two years, or twenty-one with a right of renewal for a further twenty-one years.

114. What became of that lease?—It was worked in what was called the Greymouth Coal Company. The shares were held largely in Dunedin and other places.

115. Then, what became of the lease?—The company, after spending, I think, £45,000, sold their interest by auction for £11,800 to some parties at Dunedin—Edwin Prosser and others.

116. Was the lease transferred to them?—I am inclined to think it was transferred to them at first, and they spent £5,000 or £6,000 on it, and then the Westport Company acquired it from them. They allowed them shares worth £20,000 for it in their new company just then floated.

116A. They did not give them any cash?—No.

117. It belongs now to the Westport Company?—It did belong to the Westport Company for