

175. Does the coal suffer as much damage in travelling when shipped in the unscreened state as when in the screened state?—No, perhaps not; but screening it on delivery would not be practicable.

176. They are virtually compelled to screen it here, then?—Yes.

177. You do not screen it all?—No; we sell unscreened coal. We have differential rates for screened and unscreened and small coal.

178. With reference to your objection to the unions, does that refer to the administration or to the unions themselves?—My objection is to the interference, on behalf of the unions, in the management of our mines.

179. Has the affiliation of the unions here with other unions had anything to do with the present troubles?—My impression is that it is the affiliation with other unions that has caused the troubles.

180. You had local unions here before the system of affiliation began?—Yes.

181. Had you any troubles then?—The troubles have been growing for the last two years. My impression is simply this: that affiliation makes them more tyrannical and their demands more unreasonable.

182. Then, you are involved not only in local troubles, but in affiliation troubles?—Yes; we have been under their iron heel for two years, and this is only the crisis.

183. I think we have it in your previous evidence that the strike, so far as it was local, was really settled?—It was settled provisionally, as I stated before, pending the result of the report of this Commission.

184. And it was the loading of the "Brunner" which caused the present trouble?—That was only the immediate cause, as we should have been compelled to stop in a week for want of storage, there being no vessels coming in to take the coal away.

185. As regards the strike, is it only the hewers, or all the men, who have struck?—The strike affects all; but the question of rates is really a question only between the owners and hewers.

186. What proportion of hewers is there to other labourers and surface-men?—About half of the men employed in the mine are hewers. They have all struck, as they all belong to the same union. The miners and labourers are all under the one association called the Amalgamated Miners' and Labourers' Association.

187. With reference to possible improvements in the present system of working, your suggestion only runs in the direction of storage?—Yes. I think there are very good facilities for loading the ships.

188. *Mr. Moody.*] Is there any rent or royalty charged upon coal used in coke-ovens or for fire-bricks?—That is a moot point. The lease provides that we have to pay upon what is sold. The coal is what we used to wash into the river at one time, but we have tried by degrees to find a market for it. In the meantime we pay for all the coal we sell in any way, except for miners' uses.

189. You do not pay royalty on the coke?—No.

190. *Mr. Brown.*] The colliers, then, get their coal free?—Yes. When we found that we were losing we proposed that they should pay the labour-cost of the coal they use—that is to say, the money they get from us in this way must be returned to us. That was going to be the subject of a strike, too, I believe, and was only averted by giving a fortnight's notice to charge it, and at the end of the notice the strike took place, as stated, because we loaded a Union Company's steamer. I present returns, as asked, of the coal output of the three collieries from the 1st January to the 8th March, and from the 10th March to the 28th June, under the headings as kept in the company's books.

WEDNESDAY, 15TH OCTOBER, 1890.

Mr. FRANCIS WILLIAM MARTIN sworn and examined.

191. *The Chairman.*] What position do you occupy, Mr. Martin?—I am Government District Engineer for the West Coast, Middle Island, also Chairman and Engineer, Greymouth Harbour Board.

192. You are a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers, are you not?—Yes.

193. What departments or works are you in charge of?—As District Engineer I am in charge of all the Government local works on the West Coast.

194. That is for the Public Works Department?—I act for several departments: for the Public Works with respect to buildings, &c., for the Marine Department with respect to harbours, and for the Public Works and sometimes the Survey Department with respect to roads and bridges.

195. You have nothing to do with the Native reserves?—No; unless I happened to be called upon to do anything professionally.

196. How long have you been on the Coast?—I have been ten years as District Engineer. I have been on the Coast altogether about twenty years.

197. Have you anything more than Greymouth under your charge?—Yes. My duties include the supervision of works at Westport, and on the West Coast generally.

198. In what state were the harbour-works when you took charge first?—When I first took charge here for the Government, ten years ago, the harbour-works were only just commenced—that is, the breakwater works; then it passed into the hands of the Harbour Board for two or three years. It was then a local Board, and I had nothing to do with it at that time. They had a separate engineer of their own. When the Government took over the harbour-works again the breakwater on the south side was within about 200ft. of its present length, and on the other side also within about 250ft. The lower training-bank was made—that was all.