

81. After how long an interval?—I cannot say. There was a decent lapse of time. He told me on this second occasion that he could not do anything in the meantime: that he had been trying to arrange terms with a Mr. D. Andrew, and it would be, he thought, all right. I might have told you that on the occasion of the first interview, I offered to take bills indorsed by Sir Robert Stout for my wages, and I offered terms—I did not wish to push for my money—from six months to eighteen months. I did not mention any interest; I did not intend to charge interest in any way then.

82. That was at the first interview?—Yes.

83. Was the matter mentioned at the second interview?—I would not be certain; I do not think so. If I had got Sir Robert Stout's bills I would have felt quite content in the matter.

84. What did he say about the bills?—I left him after the second interview. The third time I met him was, I think, at the foot of his office stairs, under the balcony. We chatted over the matter, and Mr. Allen, of Port Chalmers, was mentioned about going into the concern.

85. Sir Robert Stout mentioned that Mr. Allen was going into the concern to take over the business?—Yes, and I got restless at the way I had been kept from my money. Sir Robert Stout mentioned to me that the only way to get over the difficulty was to go back and work the money out in the way of bills; and I said that except I got his own bills I would never take a bill from any person connected with the business.

86. *Mr. Moore.*] What reply did Sir Robert Stout give you about the bills?—I am coming to that. He said that Mr. Allen would give me bills.

87. That was subsequent to the occasion I refer to. It was when you met Sir Robert Stout at the foot of the stairs that he mentioned about Mr. Allen. It was at the previous interview that you first mentioned about the bills?—Sir Robert Stout told me to take no notice, that I would be paid. He declined to give me an answer about the bills.

88. Did he refuse, or say he would give you the bills?—I understood him to say that he would not give me the bills.

89. Are we to understand that Sir Robert Stout did not definitely decline to give you bills?—At the time of the second interview he did not say whether he would or would not.

90. He did not state definitely?—I really depended on Sir Robert Stout.

91. At this time did he decline to give you bills?—Yes.

92. *Mr. Macgregor.*] When he spoke about Mr. Allen taking over the mine, what was said about bills then?—He mentioned to me that the only way to get out of the difficulty would be that I should go back to work and take Mr. Allen's bills. I told him at this time that I would take no person's bill connected with the business but his own. His answer to that was, that he would give "cross bills." I did not understand the meaning of "cross bills."

93. What did you understand about the cross bills: that he would give his own bills, and Allen give bills to him?—I am not up in business.

94. Are you a scholar: can you write?—I can sign my name. I am not a good writer.

95. You declined to adopt the suggestion about going to work and taking Allen's bills?—Yes.

96. What was the outcome of that business?—That was all at that time. We parted, and I think Sir Robert Stout laughed; but whether it was at my simplicity or not I do not know.

97. When did you see him next, Mr. Hamill?—I did not again see him to speak to until I saw him in Wellington.

98. A month or two ago?—I cannot give the exact time.

99. It was since the trouble with Gray arose?—Yes.

100. What passed between you then?—We spoke on the street for a minute or two. We came back to that business again with reference to the concern below. Sir Robert told me that Mr. Gray would not do anything at all in the matter of settling—he would not come to a settlement. I asked him what he was going to do for me in the matter; and his answer was, "Nothing." He told me that Gray was responsible to me.

101. That Gray was responsible to you for your wages?—Yes. He also said that if I sued Gray he would assist me. I told him that that was nonsense: that Gray was only a "dummy." My authority for saying that was a paper called the *Otago Workman*. I pulled it out of my pocket and showed it to him. I had been away from the place when the work was re-started at the mine, and the only information that I had obtained had been from the papers. I was in the North Island when the trouble between Sir Robert Stout and Gray arose.

102. What did Sir Robert Stout say to it?—That was the end of the matter.

103. You say you have been working about ten years in this mine, Mr. Hamill?—Yes, if it was that time at work.

104. During that time, have the mine and the railway always been worked as one property?—Yes.

105. And always managed by the same management?—Yes.

106. And the wages for the men working on the line were paid along with those working in the mine—on the same pay-sheet?—Yes. [A telegram, dated 20th February, 1892, from Sir Robert Stout at Hastings, was here put in evidence.]

*Witness:* One thing I forgot to mention with reference to Sir Robert Stout: He asked me to take the matter out of Mr. Fraser's hands. That was after the first interview with Sir Robert Stout, when he said that he would see that I was paid.

107. *Mr. Macgregor.*] He knew that Mr. Fraser was acting for you?—I told him so.

108. You went to take it out of Mr. Fraser's hands?—Yes.

109. And paid his charges?—Yes.

110. Did you pay Mr. Fraser immediately after you saw Sir Robert Stout?—I told Mr. Fraser that a friend had advised me to settle up.

111. Did you settle up immediately after you saw Mr. Fraser?—Yes. [Mr. Fraser's receipt, dated April 28th, 1892, produced.]