

135. Do you know whether the quantity is increasing or decreasing?—I could not tell you. I do not think it has increased or decreased during the last two or three years.

136. Do you think it has decreased within the last fifteen years?—I do not know.

137. *Hon. Mr. McGowan.*] As a matter of fact it has decreased. Can you tell us what the output of the Westport Coal Company was last year?—About 500,000 tons.

138. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] What was it ten or twelve years ago?—I could not tell you that.

139. Was it one-half?—I do not think it was one-half.

140. Has there been a gradual increase in the output of the Westport Coal Company since the company's inception?—Yes.

141. What was the increase last year?—I think it was over 100,000 tons.

*Mr. R. McKenzie:* No, 30,000.

*The Chairman:* From 36,000 to 40,000 tons.

142. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] What increase do you anticipate during the current year—from January to December?—About 70,000 tons.

143. You say that Newcastle coal is likely to come into dangerous competition with your company's coal?—That is my idea. With the large output of coal there, they must send it somewhere, and I think they will get a market here.

144. Is that the idea you wish to impress upon members of Parliament in New Zealand?—I do not know what it is for. But I do not want to make any impression upon you to frighten you.

145. You say that is your idea?—My idea is that some of the increased quantity of coal that is being put out in the Newcastle district will find its way to New Zealand.

146. That is the idea that you wish to impress upon the members of the Committee?—They can take it as they like. I do not seek to impress them with it at all. I am telling you what my opinion is.

147. *The Chairman.*] How do you draw your inference from that idea—what ground have you for it?

148. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] And why do you wish us to be impressed with it?—Being connected with the coal trade, and knowing of so many new mines being opened in New South Wales, I know that those mine-owners will try to find a market for their coal, and I think New Zealand will be one of the markets. That is what I think.

149. How long have you been connected with the Westport Coal Company?—Two years and a half.

150. Have you ever known of their having any difficulty in disposing of their coal during that two years and a half?—No, I have known of no difficulty.

151. No difficulty whatever?—No.

152. Do you think the company could dispose of a much larger quantity if they had it?—That I could not tell.

153. You have told us that you anticipate an increase in the output of 70,000 tons this year. Do you think there will be any difficulty in disposing of that?—So far this year there has been no difficulty in disposing of the coal.

154. And seven months of the year have gone?—At the present time there is a lull in the market.

155. How do you account for that?—I cannot tell.

156. Is not the winter season of the year the season in which you dispose of most?—Of course there is more household coal used then.

157. And is not this the winter-time?—Yes. I do not know whether there is any extra quantity of coal used in New Zealand from all mines. I do not know where the coal goes to; I only know that it leaves the mine.

158. As far as your company is concerned, you find some difficulty in finding a market at the present time?—I did not say that. I said there was a lull in the market just at the moment.

159. Do you say that your company at the present time has any difficulty in disposing of its coal?—I cannot answer that question. I cannot say "Yes" or "No."

160. Do you know if there was plant placed in South Africa for 120,000 tons the other day?—I do not know anything about it.

161. As a matter of fact, is it your business to find a market for the coal?—Not at all.

162. With regard to eight hours from bank to bank, do you say that this would make a reduction in your output of 7 per cent.?—Yes; nearly 7 per cent.

163. Under the proposed conditions?—Under the conditions of this new Bill. It will reduce our output 7 per cent.

164. Did you tell us when you gave evidence last year that your mine was working to its full extent?—Yes, last year.

165. Do you now state that you cannot put out any more coal?—We cannot put out any more.

166. Your haulage is working to its full limit?—Yes, this year.

167. You expressed the same opinion last year?—Yes, I suppose I did.

168. But still you are putting out 70,000 more tons?—Yes, but we have had to put more men on to the night shift to do that.

169. But it was your haulage that was limited then?—We were not prepared to put more men on the night shift then.

170. Do you think that if the company finds a market for another 30,000 tons next year that extra quantity could be put out from Millerton and Denniston under existing conditions?—I am certain it could not under existing conditions.

171. Coming to the payment of the doctor: you said that your company pays the doctor £400 per annum?—Yes, equal to £400 between the two places.