

272. Do you not think that if you were a working-man you would like to choose your own doctor in preference to having your employer choose him for you?—No, I do not see that.

273. Is it not a fact that the Westport Coal Company insist on appointing the medical officer to attend the men?—Yes, and it is proper, too, because the company will not engage a drunken fellow. They will engage a respectable man, who will conduct himself properly amongst the people.

274. Do you not think it is more to the interests of the men to appoint the doctor than it is to the interests of the company?—Not at all. The company have a better chance of getting good men than the men have. If the men had to appoint a doctor they would never be satisfied with him. He would stay only a few months with them, because they are always kicking up some shine or other.

275. Is not Dr. Fitzgerald a good man?—Yes.

276. Is it not a fact that it was the men who chose him?—Yes.

277. If it had been left to the company at the time Dr. Fitzgerald was chosen by the men, would Dr. Fitzgerald have been chosen?—The company did not appoint Dr. Fitzgerald until they made certain inquiries about him, and were satisfied.

278. I want to know whether, at the time the men called for applications, if the company had had the right to appoint the doctor they would have picked Dr. Fitzgerald?—I could not tell you that.

279. Did not the company, when Dr. Fitzgerald was appointed by the men, give notice to the men that they refused to collect the medical pence, and they would not give the doctor the use of the house nor the use of the dispensary?—Yes, that is right enough. Do you think it reasonable that a proprietor who pays over £400 a year should not have a voice in the appointment of a doctor?

280. *Hon. Mr. McGowan.*] Your company is liable under the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Act, I presume?—Yes.

281. It is to your interest that you should have a properly qualified medical man at your place seeing that you are liable under that Act if you have an inefficient doctor?—Yes.

282. That, and the additional amount that you assist the Medical Fund with, are your reasons for desiring to have a say in the appointment of the medical man?—Those are the two great reasons.

283. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Is it a fact that no man can be employed by the Westport Coal Company now in the mine without he has passed a medical examination?—That is correct. I will explain the matter. There are sixty new hands employed every month at Denniston and Granity together. That shows you how they are coming and going away. What interest can these men have in saying, "Oh, we want a doctor, and we want this and the other"? Sixty who are there this month are not there next month. That shows conclusively that the thing emanates from a very small number of workers.

284. How many men have you employed in the two mines at Millerton and Denniston?—About nine hundred men and boys.

285. You sack sixty of them every month?—I beg your pardon. We do not sack them.

286. Well, change them?—There have not been two men sacked since I went to Millerton. They leave.

287. Are you the mine-manager at Millerton?—I have answered that question.

288. Yes, but I want it to show again before the questions I am going to ask. Have you a mine-manager's certificate to allow you to be a mine-manager in this colony?—I hold an Imperial certificate.

289. But you have no certificate under the Act in New Zealand?—Except what was given to me when I made application.

290. Have you passed any examination in New Zealand?—No.

291. Consequently, you are not a mine-manager under the Act?—No. My certificate does not prevent me from being a mine-manager.

292. I will read some of your own evidence given here last year. You say now that you cannot possibly increase your output without ———?—Without a great deal of expense.

293. And, I think, without driving another haulage tunnel?—Yes.

294. Last year, in reply to Mr. Herries's question, "How many tons do you put out per day at your mine?" you answered, "Between 1,100 and 1,200 tons; but bear in mind that that is in fifteen hours. We have a day shift and a night shift." Then he asked, "Supposing this Bill were carried, and each shift had half an hour less, how much less coal would you put out then?" and you replied, "Nearly 100 tons—80 or 90 tons a day less." Do you still hold to that?—That was correct at the time when I said it.

295. And yet you tell us that you anticipate increasing your output this year by 70,000 tons?—Yes.

296. I have just quoted what you said last year. Then, in answer to this question by Mr. Herries, "Would it be possible to alter your haulage in any way so as to put out the same amount though the men worked half an hour less?" you said, "Not without very large expenditure." His next question was, "What do you call 'large expenditure'?" and you answered, "£12,000 or £15,000." Did you spend that?—No; not all yet.

297. Still, you are putting out more coal. Which evidence do you expect us to take, last year's or this year's, if it is a fair question?—You can please yourself about that.

298. *Mr. J. Allen.*] Did you make some alterations to increase your output this year?—Yes, we put a larger number of men on after we got the mine opened up.

299. Did you make any alterations underground in the haulage or in any other way?—No, not in the haulage, but we opened out.