

14. *Mr. Steward.*] I wish to know whether you consider the coal to be of equal quality with that of the New South Wales coal; if not, whether it could be supplied at a price so much cheaper as to make up for the difference? I think it is quite equal, and for some purposes superior. As a steam coal, we do not get its equal from New South Wales. Some picked pieces may be as good, if not better, but the average put into the market here is not by any means so good. The actual cost depends upon the facilities for working the mine, and getting the coal taken away.

15. *Mr. Carrington.*] Are the natural facilities offered by this mine as great as those offered by the New South Wales mines? I think so.

16. *Mr. O'Connor.*] If wrought by a cutting machine, would the facilities for working the mine not be greater than could be applied to the New South Wales mine? The coal-cutter is only good for working thin hard seams. The Ngakawau coal seams are too thick and tender to work well with the cutting machine.

17. Could that difficulty not be obviated by leaving a coal roof, as also coal pillars, as supports in the mine? Too much coal would be required for these supports. The Ngakawau coal is much too free from joints, and too friable, for these cutters being used advantageously. I have no experience of the working of these cutters for coking purposes.

18. *Mr. Carrington.*] Is there much sulphur in this coal? No, there is not much.

19. *Mr. Steward.*] Can you state if it is a good gas coal? No, it is too much of a steam coal. It would make splendid coke.

20. *Mr. O'Connor.*] Have you ascertained in what position the Waimangaroa Coal Fields stand at this place; what discoveries have been made as to the nature and extent of this field? It is part of the same field as the Ngakawau. Coal has been found of exactly the same quality and in every way similar to that of the Ngakawau coal. Only a thin seam has yet been found. There is not, however, any reason for supposing that thicker seams will not yet be found.

21. What is the thickest found? About 16 inches.

22. Do you refer to the coal seams in Syme's Claim? No. This coal was found on the south side of the river. Recently some diggers came upon coal, while trying for gold, on the north side of the river; but it has not yet been struck in a prospecting tunnel, which has been driven a distance of 137 feet. My opinion is, that if a coal seam is found on this side of the river, it will be found to occupy a very considerable area.

23. What would be the probable area? (In reply to this question the geological maps of the district were exhibited and described.)

24. Are you aware that coal has been found in Symes' Claim, near the sea level? Only carbonaceous shale with thin seams of coal between the spurs have been found above Symes, and further down the river. In the place where the coal should be, no coal has been found. I traced this shale myself. On account of the uncertainty regarding the thickness and direction of the seam, I caused a tunnel to be put in a distance of 137 feet, but came only upon the shale above mentioned. I expect, however, to receive a fuller report from Mr. Dodson by the next mail.

25. Are you aware what formation they were going through when they stopped the work? I have only the report furnished by Mr. Fisher. They stopped operations when they had got in 100 feet. I caused the tunnel to be put in 35 feet more, and formed as stated above. I am aware that it would be a matter of very great importance, as an argument for constructing the Westport Railway, if coal could be found in this place.

26. Do you know that coal has been got at Deadman's Creek, still nearer Westport? There is the seam at the base of Mount Rochfort which was described in my report of last year. I had a trench cut, and found that it had only been a slip. The Provincial Government spent a large sum of money endeavouring to discover a seam in this situation, but found nothing. They put down a number of bores and got the rods jammed, I believe; so then they suspended operations.

27. Have you examined the place? I have seen the bore, and found the formation to consist of loose broken masses of quartz.

Grey River Mines.

The attention of the witness having been called to these mines, he said,—During the past year I have been endeavouring to obtain data for opening up a mine on the opposite side of the river from that of the Brunner Mine.

MONDAY, 25TH AUGUST, 1873.

MR. ALBERT BEETHAM present, and in answer to the Chairman stated,—

* * The words in italics in the evidence of this witness were struck out by him on reading over his evidence, but were ordered by the Committee to be retained, the reporter maintaining the accuracy of his report.

A short time ago I met Dr. Hector at Nelson, and mentioned to him that I was going to Wellington to see the Government with reference to the report made by Mr. Higginson, on the subject of connecting the Ngakawau Coal Field with the Buller. Dr. Hector said that a Committee was now sitting which would be glad to receive my evidence on the subject. He advised me to telegraph, which I did to Mr. Carrington, and received an answer that the Committee would like to see me. I may say that I am Managing Director of the Albion Company. With regard to the development of the coal field, I understand that it is proposed, in accordance with the report of Mr. Higginson, who was sent down to decide how the money voted last year, and the amount which is to be voted this year, should be spent, that it is proposed to expend £70,000 on making a harbour at the Buller; and a railway from Ngakawau, a distance of eighteen miles to the Buller. The claims of Ngakawau as a possible harbour have been *entirely* ignored by Mr. Higginson. You will notice that in his report he gives up the view of making Ngakawau a harbour, and is in favour of *the harbour being at the Buller, and of making a railway from Ngakawau to the Buller*. I have seen a great deal more of the Ngakawau than Mr.