

coal, but I understand that the staiths were built expressly for shipping at a good height. There was no intention of providing storage at the time. The capacity is very small indeed for storage. Carriers do not store as a usual rule. They only store the goods for delivery and while waiting despatch.

2226. *Mr. Moody.*] What do you think would be the total cost per ton of the stores being erected here, and carrying on the work? You say it would take 4d. a ton to put it into these bins and take it out?—Yes.

2227. Then, there is the interest on the £3,000?—Yes.

2228. What would that be? About 6d. a ton altogether, I suppose?—I dare say it would. It would depend on how much use is made of the bins.

2229. *The Chairman.*] If you spent £3,000 on building the bins you must bind down certain persons to pay enough to cover the interest and cost?—I should deal with them in the same way as they do with private sidings. The persons who apply for it pay the cost of the siding, and have the use of it for ten years.

2230. Can you assist us in breaking up the 2s. that is charged by the railway for carrying coal from the mine to the port and handling the coal at the port in the process of shipment? Can you tell us how much of that 2s. you consider goes for carriage? Have you any scale?—No.

2231. What is the scale elsewhere? What is the usual scale for minerals in other ports of the colony for eight miles?—It is higher than this. It would be 2s. 6d. There would be the weighing charge, the wharfage charge, and the handling charge. The schedule charge for native coal is 2s. 6d. per eight miles.

2232. *Mr. Brown.*] Does that include the mileage and terminal charge?—Yes, the terminal charge is included in the 2s. 6d.

2233. Do you know what that charge is?—2s. 6d. is the minimum charge.

2234. *Mr. Moody.*] They are favoured here by only being charged 2s., and 6d. for royalty?—Yes.

2235. *The Chairman.*] The question comes to be of importance, because we have it in evidence that application is made by other companies who propose to work the coal, and who would only require the wharf handling, and very slight use of the railway—only, in fact, the use of that portion which is along the edge of the river, this side of the bridge; and they have been informed they would be charged 1s. 3d. —Yes.

2236. Was that question referred to you at all?—No.

2237. You have never been consulted?—No.

2238. So that you can give no reason why the charge for wharfage alone should be 1s. 3d., whereas the charge for wharfage and the carriage for eight miles is 2s.?—No, I could not tell you. A terminal charge of 1s. at each end is a usual charge.

2239. That does not cover the working of the hydraulic cranes, I suppose?—No; that is only the ordinary cost.

2240. That is merely taking the coal or other goods from the wagons, or doing the necessary shunting to enable them to be taken away by private persons?—Yes, and clerical work in connection with it.

2241. But here the terminal charge would be intended, I presume, to cover the cost of working the hydraulic cranes?—Yes.

2242. And weighing?—Yes.

2243. And doing the work of delivering the coal?—Yes.

2244. Doing the work of the wharf-labourer?—Yes.

2245. There is no wharf-labour employed upon the coal, beyond that of the railway company, until it goes on board the steamer?—No; the wharf-labourers who handle the coal are in the Railway employment here.

2246. *Mr. Moody.*] Where would you consider the most convenient place here to erect the storage?—I have not looked at the plan. You require to see the plan to see the line of street laid out here; but I think somewhere in the line of this building, at the lower end of the wharf, a site could be found for it.

2247. *The Chairman.*] On the whole, after considering the matter, do you think that the supply of extra storage is a very urgent matter?—I do not.

2248. Would it not greatly improve the output of coal from the port?—I do not think so.

2249. *Mr. Moody.*] Would you have sufficient rolling-stock, supposing the Blackball was getting into operation, and doing five or six hundred tons a day, to work that traffic too?—Not in addition to the present, I think. The distance would be longer, and the trucks would be longer away, for one thing.

2250. You would, I suppose, if this Coal Creek coalfield opened up?—For two or three years.

2251. Because you would have a coal delivery at this end of the bridge?—Yes.

2252. *The Chairman.*] Now, supposing the Railway Commissioners were to undertake the working of the Coal Creek Mine, would the present rolling-stock be sufficient?—I think so, for two or three years.

2253. If the Commissioners had to provide rolling-stock and everything?—Yes.

2254. *Mr. Brown.*] You have 250 wagons here?—Yes.

2255. Is that the greatest number you have ever had here in use?—Yes.

2256. You have never had more?—We have never had more.

2257. Has the output been greater than it is now?—No, not very much. I think there was one year in which it was rather more than in the past twelve months.

2258. *The Chairman.*] We observed old wagons that are along the line—the square wagons: have there been a number of these sent to Westport?—Yes.

2259. When that is done is there a transfer of account from the one railway branch to the