

2611. But in support of the seamen's strike with the Union Steamship Company?—Yes.

2612. Then there has been another strike since? They only went to work for the three weeks, and since this the mines have been idle?—Yes.

2613. The company's business, then, as coal-producers, must have been materially interfered with?—Yes.

2614. Do you think that would have any tendency to irritate the company?—Most certainly; but I know it irritated the workmen when the Union Steamship Company's boats came and took the coal in the face of the fact that they had a distinct agreement that it should not be supplied to that company's boats.

2615. You worked for the coal company, did you not?—Yes.

2616. Not for the Union Steamship Company?—No.

2617. Is it usual for employes to inquire what is done with the production of a factory or coal-mine?—We labour under extraordinary circumstances.

2618. Were they circumstances of oppression in any way?—No, I could not say that; but we were passing through one of the greatest convulsions of trade possible at the time.

2619. In what respect?—In the dispute between capital and labour, as to whether labour should amalgamate, one society with another, or not.

2620. That is, affiliating your unions?—Yes. We wished to keep aloof from that dispute if the Grey Valley Coal Company could find other boats than those interested in that dispute to carry the coal.

2621. Did that really affect your interests here, do you think?—Well, that is speculative. You might say it might and it might not.

2622. You were not aware that it had affected your interests in the past?—I think it could be proved that it had affected our interests—or working-men's interests—on previous occasions.

2623. I speak of your interests. Had it affected your interests in the past?—It had not directly affected our interests in the past.

2624. Then the whole of this quarrel really arose outside the district altogether?—Yes; outside of New Zealand, so far as I know.

2625. And chiefly in Australia?—Yes.

2626. Do you know what the dispute in Australia was that gave rise to this difficulty here?—The nearest that I can get to it is that the marine officers desired to affiliate with the Maritime Council of Australia.

2627. Of course that was a matter of opinion as to whether it was right or wrong?—Yes.

2628. The employers held that they should not?—Yes.

2629. They thought they should?—Yes.

2630. Have the mine officers joined a union?—The mine officers have an association of their own, and are not affiliated with the miners. Their association is called the Deputies' Union.

2631. The deputies were not affiliated?—No. I am speaking of Brunnerton now. There was a contention that the deputies ought to be in the Miners' Association, but the workmen gave way and consented to their remaining an association by themselves.

2632. Then the affiliation of the marine officers with the Seamen's Union in Australia was really the seat of the dispute?—So far as I know, it really was.

2633. Then, are the miners now opposing a principle they have already accepted as applied to their own deputies?—No. I must explain that the proposition was made by the miners to include the deputies in the Miners' Association, but the mine-manager objected, and the miners gave way. The miners thought that they should be included in their union, as they would all work more harmoniously together; but the manager objected upon the ground that they would be out of his control and under the control of the union rules, and thus he would lose proper control in the management of the mine. In consequence therefore of his representation the miners gave way against their own union.

2634. Was not that the contention of the Shipowners' Association in Australia in regard to the ships' officers?—I think so.

2635. Then you have given way in this district upon a similar point, but you strike because others contend for that principle in another place?—Yes; we gave way on representations.

2636. You conceded the point here amongst yourselves locally, but you strike because there is some other body wanting the thing elsewhere?—There is a general question.

2637. And now personally you propose to give way on that point even?—Yes: what I would recommend would be to practically accept the whole of the Grey Valley Coal Company's terms, and leave them a free market.

2638. In negotiating this matter with Mr. Kennedy, you went as an individual, not as a representative, did you not?—As an individual. The Miners' Association was not aware of what I was doing—in fact, there were some very strong opinions expressed about my interviewing the manager, and seeing Mr. Kennedy, before they knew what I was doing; but when I explained the position of affairs, and what I had done, the meeting, which was a big one, passed a resolution, without a dissentient voice, approving of the step I had taken.

2639. *The Chairman.*] Was that a meeting of the members of the union?—Yes; a formal meeting of the union was called, and the hall was packed.

2640. *Mr. Brown.*] What date was it held on?—On Friday night. Another meeting was called, and I further explained what I had been doing in endeavouring to get some independent party to intercede in the matter, and again a motion was carried upholding what I had done, and thanking me for my exertions in trying to bring about a settlement.

2641. Why did the executive of the union not take up these negotiations?—I am not prepared to answer that question.