

there with regard to the mine and the necessity for careful working, and I always tried to lead them to give their answers apart from the question of the strike, because I know men will speak as they feel in these kind of matters. I have gone to such men as I could mostly depend upon, and who have been there from the time I was clerk of the mine, and they all say it requires most careful working.

3049. *The Chairman.*] Do you remember in your time how the hewers were paid—by piece-work?—Yes.

3050. On screened coal?—Yes.

3051. Do you remember what they got?—From 3s. 6d. to 4s. 3d. and 5s. 3d.

3052. Per ton of screened coal?—Yes.

3053. Why were these differences of prices?—The difference would be on account of the bords they were working in. It would be easier to get coal from one place than another.

3054. So that they had a differential rate?—Yes.

3055. By whom was the differential rate set up?—The difference was entirely in the hands of the manager.

3056. And did his decision in those cases give perfect satisfaction?—Yes, perfect satisfaction, I believe.

3057. You never heard complaints from the men?—I never heard complaints, and I was in a position to hear them, because it was my duty to pay the men every fortnight.

3058. Did they get anything extra beyond that? Were they paid for timbering, clearing up, or anything of that sort?—No. Very often Mr. Taylor would during the night time put in a shift of men to timber for them.

3059. They got their timbering done for them?—Yes.

3060. Was that done by day-wages?—If they were coal-miners he would engage them, and pay them so much for a week's or a month's timbering.

3061. That would be extra, then?—Yes, it was an extra.

3062. It was simply this: the men were engaged in mining, but they got an extra allowance, or so much per month, for putting in their timbering overtime?—That is correct. He endeavoured to do it at night time, when the mine was free from the miners.

3063. Was there any combination of the miners in those days?—As a union?

3064. Yes?—No. But I remember that Mr. Taylor discharged several men who came from Ballarat as coal-miners, but who he proved were not coal-miners, because there was an agreement which they had signed in Ballarat as coal-miners. He himself, being a thorough judge, discharged them.

3065. But why do you connect that with the fact of there being no union?—I never knew of any combination at that time; but I think he did it purely on the ground of the men's incompetency. I remember the circumstances particularly, as I wrote to the traffic manager calling his attention to what would appear to be a discrepancy between his books and mine (this will lead to the cause of the mine-manager discharging some of those incompetent men); so the traffic manager asked me my reasons for making that statement. "Well," I said, "Mr. Lucas, when they look over my books and see that I have been paying men for a certain amount of coal, and your books do not show so much as that having been sold, there is the discrepancy." One fortnight his books showed a less amount of ninety tons of coal being sold in Greymouth than I had paid the men for at the Brunner Mine, and he asked me how I thought it might be remedied. "Well," I said, "I know how it can be done. You have men here who are not coal-miners, and instead of bringing out coal it is slack, and is all passing through the screens." Each truck carried 12cwt., and they were allowed 2cwt. on the tub or truck of coal for slack. They were supposed to bring 12cwt. out, and were paid for 10cwt.

3066. That is, they mined 12cwt. and were paid for 10cwt.?—Yes.

3067. In those days the coal was carried down in barges?—Yes.

3068. And it was under the charge of Mr. Lucas?—Yes.

3069. Do you remember how much the barges carried?—From 16 tons to 22 tons.

3070. What was the cost per ton of the carriage of the coal by barges? Was it by contract?—There were four men working a boat, and each man had £4 per week.

3071. And how many trips did they make in a week?—Generally one trip a day. That was the average. Sometimes they made two.

3072. Were there many interruptions owing to the state of the river?—Sometimes a boat could not get up for a fortnight at a stretch.

3073. Do you remember anything about the output of coal in those times—how much it came to in a year?—No.

3074. How many boats were employed?—There were, I think, six boats employed.

3075. *Mr. Brown.*] How were they got up the river?—By horses.

3076. That would be an additional cost?—Yes, it would be an additional cost; it would be for four men in a boat and one driver.

3077. *The Chairman.*] Did the driver work by contract?—No; he was paid day-wages. I think he had from £3 to £3 10s. a week.

3078. For him and his horses?—The company found the horses. That wage was just for driving.

3079. And you have no clear idea of what the cost of the coal was in taking it down in that way?—Only as to the wages paid for it and the cost of the horses. The men had to discharge all the coal themselves.

3080. When the thing was going it would be about 5s. or 6s. a ton without allowing for the interruptions?—Yes; these five men had to be paid, wet or dry.

3081. *Mr. Brown.*] Do you know what the value of those boats was?—Yes. Most of the boats were built here, at from £100 to £120 each.