

3116. And it was resolved on by the whole?—Yes.

3117. The wharf-labourers and the wages-men will receive no benefit whatever by the strike?—No.

3118. Even if the miners got all they ask for?—If the miners got all they asked for, and were working, the benefit the lumpers would get would be that they would be in full work. As you know, they trim the coal.

3119. They had that before the dispute arose, and they will receive no further benefit at all from this strike, will they?—No.

3120. And they will return to their old employment?—The only benefit has been some strike-pay, which has been very small.

3121. Is the strike-pay equal to what they were earning?—The strike-pay would not be one-quarter equal to what they were earning.

3122. How many men are employed on the wharf in connection with the coal work?—The average would be about forty. I have seen seventy-two men engaged on the wharf.

3123. Is this present stoppage connected with the question of wages at all?—No, it is not throughout the whole of New Zealand a complaint as to wages.

3124. What is the trouble then?—The struggle commenced in Australia, and the main factor in the cause of the strike there was the shipping companies. For instance, Howard Smith and Co. made their officers sign when they were paid for £15 a month, but there was always a rebate of £2, and the officers would not stand that any longer. That I consider is the main factor in the present struggle.

3125. How do you get your information in this district as to this distant dispute?—Well, I suppose the Maritime Council gets it from Australia.

3126. Then it is entirely *ex parte*, I presume?—Well, I heard of this affair of the shipping companies in Australia long before this strike took place.

3127. Your information comes chiefly through the Maritime Council?—Yes, and I believe it is reliable.

3128. Do they write at length explaining matters, or do they send telegrams?—If you get a telegram to a certain effect, you get a letter of instructions afterwards, and a full statement.

3129. You say you have no dispute here at all?—No.

3130. Are you aware of the object of this Commission?—I understood that it was to inquire into the reason of the miners' not working, and to see if the haulage by the railway could be altered. I have gone over the miners' books, and their average wage cannot be stated for the last eighteen months to reach £3 per week per man.

3131. You are aware that one of the purposes of the Commission is to see if a reduction of the royalty or railage should be made?—Yes.

3132. Can you tell the Commissioners how that question can be connected with the dispute of the marine officers in Australia, and which you say is the basis of the strike?—I think that is a dispute between the miners and the loss the company endeavours to make up.

3133. The miners, at all events, are satisfied with their wages?—I could not say that the miners are satisfied.

3134. The wages-men are?—The surface-men are satisfied with their 10s. a day, and the wharf-men with their 2s. an hour.

3135. But you are aware of the miners having entered into an arrangement with the owners of the mine as regards wages?—I think, when the first lock-out occurred they came to terms.

3136. So that there was an agreement?—Yes.

3137. The strike has nothing to do with that agreement, but with the Australian quarrel?—Yes.

3138. And application is made to the Government to reduce the railage whilst the men are out on an Australian quarrel?—Yes.

3139. Is there any connection between the two—between the Government giving, say, a reduction of 6d. on the royalty or railage and the marine officers' dispute?—No. I always thought the object of the Commission was to meet the question between the miners and the company.

3140. Which is settled, practically?—I never connected that with the strike in Australia or the strike in this colony at all. I never could see it in that light.

3141. Does the union here take its instructions from the Maritime Council?—Properly speaking, all the unions take their instructions from the Maritime Council in the colony.

3142. Have you opportunities of judging whether the Maritime Council's decisions are wise or otherwise?—I must admit that I differed in the Conference—

3143. Even with the *ex parte* statements received?—and I also found fault with them. For instance, I remember Mr. McLean talking with me one Sunday afternoon in Wellington for a few hours, and I advanced an opinion or two, and he asked me why I did not express those opinions before the strike took place; and I said, "Well, Mr. McLean, I am not a member of the Maritime Council, and therefore was not admitted to that body, otherwise I should certainly have urged with all my powers that we should prevent the strike coming to New Zealand."

3144. Have you accepted the position of the strike at the instance of a distant body with whom you differ?—Yes. If I am joined to a body, although I may not agree with all their opinions, I acknowledge the head, and yield my difference and try to be loyal to that body.

3145. Are you satisfied with the success or otherwise of the union up to the present time?—I cannot say I am satisfied, although, if this strike does end as the unions would wish it, I am satisfied that, notwithstanding that it has been a great loss to the colony generally, eventually it will work a good.

3146. In what direction?—The question was put to me in Wellington as to whether I would go in for a complete victory on either side. "Well," I said, "no; I would not go in for a complete