

that is to say, every working-day—but the average time for the last six months has only been 4·4 days a week. Thus before the restriction the weekly average earning per man was £3 8s. 11d. per week. The maximum was earned by the same party as earned the £1 2s. 4d. after the restriction in the period ending the 30th August, and the earning for each man of that period only amounted to 15s. per working-day. I have computed the actual loss to the company by the restriction, and it amounts, I find, to 77 tons per diem. The cost of hewing and trucking this is certainly saved, but, on the other hand, all the other running-expenses of the mine are continued at the same rate. Therefore, if the output is reduced, the cost per ton of coal delivered is rapidly increased. I may explain this by an instance. If the output were increased from 2,500 to 10,000 tons per fortnight the cost of the coal in the wagons is reduced by 33 per cent. owing to this cost alone.

3573. *The Chairman.*] Can you afford such particulars as will enable the Commissioners to arrive at the actual cost of the coal per ton when the yield is about an average?—I furnish the office return made up for the fortnight ending the 30th August, which gives all the detailed charges and shows the final cost of the coal to be 10s. 7d. This was when there was an average output of 7,277 tons for a fortnight. [Return put in, and marked “Exhibit No. 41.”] Since the strike no alteration has been made in the tariff or rate of wages. I put in a copy of the regulations now in force. [Copy of regulations put in, and marked “Exhibit No. 42.”] The real reason for the restriction I believe to have been an endeavour to drop down the maximum earning, and so reduce the average, that the company would be unable to reduce the rate of wages. Thus, with good places, and when the good hewers were restricted in their output, the company were the sufferers.

3574. Could you inform the Commissioners as to the relative market-value and the uses of the Westport coal as compared with other New Zealand coal—say, Greymouth coal?—The Westport coal is not very uniform in character. In some places it is stony, and one bord will be in very stony coal and the next in beautiful coal. I put in a printed document showing its comparative value with the Grey coal and other coals, both in New Zealand and elsewhere, for gas and steam purposes. For gas purposes the Westport Coal-mine manager considers it equal to the Greymouth coal, but elsewhere the Greymouth coal is undoubtedly preferred for that purpose. The alleged difference in value has been fully worked out by Mr. Graham, of Dunedin, whose report I put in. [Report put in, and marked “Exhibit No. 43.”] For steam-generating purposes, the Coalbrookdale coal is as good as can be found in any part of the world. The report of the trial made by Mr. Cunningham Smith shows it to be 25 per cent. better than the New South Wales coal. For locomotive purposes the Coal-pit Heath coal is stated to be slightly better than the Coalbrookdale coal, according to a report by Mr. Rotherham, who made special trials of these coals; but for household purposes the Coalbrookdale coal commands 2s. advance on the Grey Valley coal.

3575. Can you inform the Commissioners if there are any hardships involved in the conditions under which the men work at the Denniston mines, as compared with the Brunner Mine?—Denniston stands 2,000ft. above the sea; it is healthy, and there is not much frost, but a good deal of fog. I do not consider that there is any great difference arising from the climate that will affect the life of the miner; but, of course, it is not of such easy access as Brunnerton. All the cottages at Denniston excepting seventy belong to the men. The company own the rest, having built or bought them.

3576. Will you give the Commissioners any information as to the reasons that led you to recommend the shutting-up of the Wallsend Mine?—I will supply a copy of my report to the directors of the Grey Valley Coal Company, as to the best mode of working their properties, and in which my reasons are given for recommending the closing of the Wallsend Mine.

3577. What are the charges on the coal?—The royalty is 6d., and the railage 2s. 6d., including wharfage charges. I think this is reduced now to 2s. 4½d. No storage is paid for by the company. There is storage for about 1,000 tons in wagons and for about 400 tons in the staiths at the wharf; and, in addition, there is about 1,000 tons storage provided for by bins on the hill. That is where the small line wagons are emptied, thus making 2,400 tons of storage in all. This storage-space is used when there are no steamers in port, so as to prevent the stoppage of the mine. They are never used except for steam-coal. The bins at the mine cost the company about £1 per ton; they are self-delivering into the railway-wagons.

WEDNESDAY, 5TH NOVEMBER, 1890

Mr. THOMAS BROWN examined.

*Witness:* I am mine-manager for the Westport Coal Company, and have been so for six years. I was previously manager at Wallsend Mine, Greymouth. I hold a manager's certificate. The rentals of the houses belonging to the company, of which there are about forty or fifty of two, four, and eight rooms each, are from 4s. 6d. for two rooms per week to 10s. for eight rooms per week. These are the rates charged to the men. As to the restrictions on the output, I got no notice of this from the union. We heard about it and found it in operation, causing a diminished output of 77 tons or over per day from the previous output. I protested against it by letter to the secretary of the Miners' Association, but no notice of this letter was taken by the Association. Although I wrote on the subject twice—namely, on the 16th and 17th June—I received no reply to my letters till the 22nd July. [Copies of letters put in.] This system was continued until the middle of August; but Mr. Waters wrote to me on the subject on the 20th August, and I sent a copy of his letter to the secretary of the association. I received a reply from him dated the 25th August. [Copy of letter put in.] There were two restrictions—one restricting each man to nine tubs per day, and the other limiting the weekly output to what it was six months before. The letter of the 25th August complained of want of boxes; but the men were fully supplied with boxes, and the