

84. *Mr. Hogg.*] Can you speak yourself as to the quality of the Springfield coal?—It is an inferior brown coal, and does not give satisfactory results for locomotives. If it were equal to the Kaitangata, Allandale, or Shag Point, we should use it in preference to the West Coast coal for locomotive purposes in Canterbury. We are using brown coals in the workshops at Addington, mainly for the purpose of reducing the smoke-nuisance.

85. Have the haulage-charges between Springfield and Christchurch been materially reduced? No. The rates have not been reduced for some considerable time; but there has been an alteration of the rates.

86. Was the effect of the reduction to lead to a much increased output?—There has been no increase. In fact, the brown-coal trade, so far as I have been able to judge, is in a very bad state in Canterbury. There is no increase; and the Springfield mine, which used to do a large business, is practically dead. They have a pottery there, and, even for the production of the pottery, they have to use part West Coast and Newcastle coal. Their own is not strong enough alone for the kilns.

87. *Mr. Duthie.*] That does not affect the cost of haulage on the railway?—No.

88. You suppose from that that the coal has fallen in favour amongst consumers?—There are such large quantities of Newcastle, Westport, Blackball, and Westport-Cardiff sold, the various agents pushing their wares; and I suppose the householder prefers something which will boil the kettle more rapidly than brown coal, which is very slow.

89. *The Chairman.*] Do you use exclusively New Zealand coal for the railways?—The universal practice throughout New Zealand is to use New Zealand coal; but, owing to untoward circumstances, in not being able to get a steamer to take coal to Dargaville, we have occasionally used a small amount of Newcastle.

90. You prefer to use New Zealand coal because it is best?—It is sufficiently good and very satisfactory, so far as locomotive requirements are concerned, especially Westport coal.

91. For steaming purposes, is it equal to the best you can get from Newcastle?—Yes. I have no hesitation in saying that Westport is equal, if not superior, to any coal the department can obtain. We use it exclusively on the Rimutaka Incline, where the test is the most severe in the colony.

92. The Westport coals get rather broken up?—All West Coast coals are of a friable nature.

93. And the loading by the staiths tends to break up the coal more than it otherwise would be?—I consider the staiths are not a proper means of shipping screened coal, because the damage done is very great; but for shipping steam-coal the staiths are, I consider, quite sufficient. The damage is not material.

94. By screened coal you mean coal for household purposes. You are convinced that loading by the staiths damages that?—Yes.

95. But that coal for steamers or for locomotive purposes is not affected detrimentally whatever?—I will not go as far as that. A large quantity of the coal consumed by the locomotives is screened coal; for such purposes as working on the Rimutaka Incline, for the incline engines, we want the best coal we can procure, and we have to specify for screened coal. Where the grades are heavy we always specify for screened coal, and that coal should be shipped by cranes at Westport, in the same way as obtains at Greymouth, where the method of shipment is the most suitable.

96. Could you give an approximate idea as to what extent it would cheapen coal to load it by the staiths?—I think that is more for coal people to answer.

97. In reference to haulage rates on the railways, have you the same scale throughout the colony, the same rate of haulage for coal?—There are certain local rates. I can put in a statement giving all the local rates.

*Native Coal for Export to Places outside the Colony of New Zealand.*—Native coal (brown, anthracite, or bituminous) for export to places outside the Colony of New Zealand, consigned from collieries to vessels clearing for ports beyond the Colony of New Zealand, will be charged 25 per cent. less than the classified rates, or local rates.

*Kawakawa Section.*—Native coal, Class Q, from the Kawakawa Coal-mine to port for shipment, will be charged 2s. 6d. per ton, including weighing and discharging into ships.

*Whangarei Section.*—Goods of Classes P and Q consigned from Waro to Opau for shipment will be charged 2s. 6d. per ton, including weighing and delivery to ship by skip. Goods of Classes P and Q consigned from Ruatangata to Opau for shipment will be charged 2s. per ton, including weighing and delivery to ship by skip.

*Kaihu Section.*—Class P will be charged as Class N.

*Auckland Section.*—Coal (native, brown) between Onehunga and Auckland will be charged 1s. 9d. per ton. Coal, not otherwise specified, between Onehunga and Auckland will be charged 2s. 6d. per ton. Coal-slack, native, delivered on railway-trucks at pit's mouth at a price not exceeding 2s. per ton, will be charged at the rate of 6s. per ton for conveyance from Huntly or Kimihia to Komata-Thames and intermediate stations. Minimum quantity, 6 tons per truck. Consignment-note must be indorsed by consignor as follows: "I hereby certify that the price obtained for the coal-slack entered hereon does not exceed 2s. per ton delivered on railway-trucks in railway-siding." Coal-slack, native, for lime-burning, ore-roasting, and brick-burning purposes, from Huntly or Kimihia, will be charged as follows to the stations named: Te Kuiti, 5s. per ton; Te Aroha, 4s. 6d.; Paeroa, 5s. 3d. Minimum quantity, 6 tons per truck. Goods of Classes P and Q from Kimihia Siding will be charged 1d. per ton in addition to the classified or local rates.

*Wellington-Napier-New Plymouth Section.*—Coal between Spit and Napier will be charged as Class Q. Coal between Wanganui and Aramohe Junction will be charged as Class Q. Coal-dross for lime-burning purposes, from Wellington to Mauriceville, will be charged at the classified rates for Class P. Coal, imported, from Wellington to Petone will be charged 3s. 2d. per ton. Coal from Wellington to Ngahauranga will be charged 2s. 6d. per ton.

*Hurunui-Bluff Section.*—Coal from or to Fernhill to or from stations beyond Abbotsford will be charged 4½d. per ton in addition to the classified rates and charges from or to Abbotsford. The following rates will be charged between Bluff and Ocean Beach: Native coal and manures (other than street, stable, and farmyard), 2s. per ton; minimum quantity, 5 tons per truck. A terminal charge of 2s. 6d. per ton will be made on all coal loaded at the public sidings on the Nightcaps Coal Company's Railway at Nightcaps Station in addition to the ordinary rates.

*Greymouth-Brunner Section.*—Coals and coal dross consigned to port for shipment will be charged 1s. 10d. per ton for distances not over eight miles, and for each additional mile or part of a mile ¾d. per ton will be charged, including weighing and delivering to the ship. Minimum quantity, 5 tons per truck. Coal to Greymouth will be charged 2s. per ton. Coal consigned to Greymouth from the Blackball Coal Company's mine will be charged 1s. 8d.