

8. There is no distinction between the two classes?—No.
9. It is just a question of tonnage?—Yes.
10. They have therefore no incentive in mining the coal to prevent it breaking up. The only question they consider is how much they can get out?—Yes. There is no incentive to produce a larger proportion of lumps.
11. Are these iron men used extensively?—Yes; the whole of the mines are working the iron men.
12. Do they save labour?—No; I do not think they diminish the number of men.
13. But they have the effect of breaking up the coal?—I will swear it.
14. Are you a practical coal-miner?—Yes.
15. Is there any other respect in connection with mining operations at Denniston in which you think there is a waste of coal involved?—In my opinion, I think it is a great fallacy to have the coal screened. I think it should be consumed just as it comes from the mine. It would do away with a lot of expense. The continual screening breaks up the coal and makes a bigger percentage of slack. If the coal was delivered as it comes from the mine it could be given to the consumer at a much smaller cost.
16. How many screenings has it to go through?—It is screened at Denniston and again at the port of delivery.
17. It is not screened at Westport before being loaded?—No.
18. You think the two screenings could be obviated?—Certainly.
19. And it would be more advantageous to send it to the consumer as it comes from the mine?—Yes; for I believe it would have a tendency to reduce the percentage of slack.
20. The cost is increased by the labour of screening the coal, and by the waste the screening involves?—Certainly.
21. In any case, do you not think the screening at the pit's mouth could be done away with? Do you think it could be deferred till the coal arrived at its destination?—Certainly. But I think it could be done away with altogether.
22. As a practical miner, you know something about the effect that loading by staiths has upon the coal?—Yes.
23. What is the effect of that method of loading?—It always tends to make a bigger percentage of slack, and if they loaded by cranes, as they do in other parts of the colony, there would be another saving again.
24. It has been stated to the Committee that the coal suffers a loss of from 2s. to 3s. a ton by that method of loading, that is by loading by the staiths?—Certainly.
25. You corroborate that?—Yes. But I do not believe in screening at all. I would like to see it abolished altogether.
26. The effect would be to diminish the cost?—Yes.
27. There is a large class of consumers who like to have screened coal?—I do not know. Personally speaking, I have found that if a lump is of any size you have always to break it down.
28. At Denniston, for instance, do the people like any particular kind?—The majority like to have a good mixed box of coal.
29. *Mr. Duthie.*] I do not understand you in regard to the extra cost or injury to the coal by cutting by the machines. I was in the mines about six months ago, and saw both systems; and I do not quite understand your statement. Would you make it more clear why there is more breakage of coal under the system of machine-cutting as against the picking. The cut by the machine seemed to be thinner, and so did not waste so much, and the same blast has to take place in either case?—When the coal is undercut across what is called the face, in many cases it will be of such a loose nature that it will require no powder at all, that is on account of its friable nature, and by putting a vertical chamber in. Then, the miner has nothing to do, as the coal will fall. There is a vertical chamber and an under chamber; if the vertical chamber was not put in the coal would not fall. Consequently, the blasters run a series of holes along the face. There is no vertical chamber put in with the machine. They charge them up with blasting powder and fire them, so that the coal which otherwise would have been good becomes a mass of slack.
30. From my observation that was not usual in any face I saw them working at. They were taking out good merchantable coal, though in some of the faces it was exceptionally friable?—When you get a seam of coal it does not vary that much. At the Iron Bridge, where I was working when the introduction of the machines took place, there was quite a number of places like that. These men are always bound to do a certain amount of work in a shift. They will get the coal down by hook or by crook.
31. That is all the explanation you have to offer?—Yes.
32. In the course of your evidence you say, in reference to screening, you thought everybody ought to be compelled to use unscreened coal?—Yes, certainly.
33. Do you mean to say that you would pass legislation to compel people to use unscreened coal?—I would abolish screening.
34. They would not be able to sell the coal?—I guarantee they would.
35. *The Chairman.*] You think they would if the coal was introduced to the consumer in its unscreened state?—Yes.
36. *Mr. Pirani.*] Your experience is that good fires can be made with a large proportion of slack as with lump coal?—Yes; every bit.
37. *The Chairman.*] The impression you mean to convey is this: That the unscreened coal has not been introduced to the consumer?—No; not in its natural state.
38. And consequently the consumer does not know the quality of it?—No. I have seen better fires made from medium lumps and slack. Of course, the quality of the Coalbrookdale coal is greatly impaired by the Granity coal. I was always puzzled to see Coalbrookdale tickets on the Granity wagons.