

81. If I got coal from you you would not weigh it all in particular sacks?—The cart backs up in the yard, and you could put a lot of sacks on, and then put the dray over the weighbridge and weigh it, but if you ordered half a ton of coal it might turn 11 cwt. or $9\frac{1}{2}$ cwt.; then you would have to put your cart back and put more in.

82. You do not charge them for the additional quantity?—They would say, "I ordered a certain quantity, and it is not here."

83. The clerk at the weighbridge will issue you a ticket?—If you send half a ton or quarter of a ton, that would increase the cost. I weigh for other people, and a good many people weigh at my weighbridge.

84. Do you not think the Corporation could erect weighbridges in certain parts of the city with benefit to the consumer, and issue Corporation tickets certifying that the weight of coal is there?—The Corporation did own a weighbridge, but sold it. It is rather difficult to answer that question. If that was made the rule they would have to be all over the city. Either that, or there would be a great deal more cartage, and that would increase the cost of the coal.

85. But you could have them in central places. In Dunedin, where they have Corporation weighbridges, they have a by-law which says that they cannot deliver unless they have a check Corporation ticket?—I think it would be a very good thing.

86. The consumer just pays for the coal that is on the ticket. The coal is sold over the weighbridge, and they get a ticket certifying there is so-much coal. He is charged so-much per ton, and so-much additional weight?—Are not the circumstances in Dunedin and Wellington different? I am afraid it would not work here. Theoretically, I think it would be a very good thing, but, practically, it would not work. There are an enormous number of people who come and order a hundredweight. A man might go out with twenty-five bags in his cart, and they would be all for different people. If you put it over the weighbridge a man might have more than his share in his bag.

87. That objection would affect the supply of coal in small quantities in bags; but, of course, at Home they have a different system?—You see, the circumstances are different here. They will not take it in big quantities.

88. Even in the City of Glasgow for many years any coal delivered in small quantities was weighed by scales in the carts.—I believe they do that in Sydney now.

89. It was done in Glasgow thirty years ago?—I think the Inspector forces them to carry the scales.

90. You do not think any reduction could be made in that particular item—bagging, weighing, and screening, 6d. per ton?—No. I go on this: that the net boiling-down of the whole thing does not leave you a very big margin. Of course, these are only suppositious items. The margin is not very big. I prefer to sell coal in large quantities at 1s. per ton than at a possible margin of 11s. in small quantities.

91. You also mentioned that you deliver a ton of coal at Karori for 3s: surely there is a mistake in that?—I do not think I said that.

92. You said the delivery all over was 3s., and you said, "We may have to deliver to Karori, which would take a great deal of the cream off"?—As a matter of fact, sometimes a man will take half a day, and then he has to have a light cart, and cannot do more than half a ton.

93. In the City of Dunedin they have a certain district. Inside of that is a certain price, and outside you charge them more. Outside the certain district we want another shilling or a couple of shillings. They have a Coal-dealers' Association which regulates the price?—That is an excellent idea: they have talked of it here. I believe dealers take coal up to Wadestown, away up the hills, at the ordinary rate.

94. It is not fair?—It makes the man living next door to you pay for the man living miles away. Some people I know go out to Island Bay, and I send them out their coal for no extra charge. But if a stranger came they would have to pay extra. The Dunedin system is very much better.

95. And you also said that from every ton of coal you got from the ship's side you got 2 cwt. of slack?—I really think it is more than that.

96. What is the size of the mesh you put it through?—I should say $\frac{3}{8}$ in. I suppose you do not screen it much in Dunedin?

97. We have the lignites there; but the Westport coal, principally Coalbrookdale, is all screened, but it is only put through what you may call a duster, $\frac{1}{8}$ in. ?—Ours is bigger than that.

98. In fact, I have always held that the Westport coal did not need screening?—It is waste of the best coal in the world.

99. So the whole fact of the matter is that you buy coal at £1 2s. 6d. ?—Yes.

100. And you sell it to the customers at £1 14s. ?—Yes.

101. And out of that you have 2 cwt. of slack?—That is my estimate. You will probably have more on the average. It is not only what you take out, but you will find that you have a big heap like slack lime; that would increase the margin.

102. You take the coal from the ship's side, and you pay them £1 2s. 6d. per ton for the coal as it comes out of the hold. You cart it to your yard, you bin it, you screen it, you bag it and you weigh it, and you deliver it to the consumer, and you run all risks of bad debts and loss by weight for 11s. 6d. per ton: is that so?—Yes.

103. In connection with the Newcastle coal, you seem to show that you have had a lot of experience in connection with that coal: do you hold any agency?—Yes, of one company.

104. A Newcastle firm?—Yes.

105. What is about the average household consumption of Newcastle coal?—I suppose you might say one-quarter—5 cwt. in the ton—in the town. For up-country purposes I send Newcastle coal. I tell them it will suit their purpose better, because they will leave it outside, and it is a harder coal. In town they like a coal to burn up quicker. The cargoes of the West Coast boats to Wellington are not big. If they were colliers the expense would be next to nothing—that is, compared with the passenger-boats—and the coal has to bear a portion of this.