

be better still. The only objection I have to the Order in Council clause is on account of the time it takes.

46. Do you find any difficulty in getting an Order in Council?—I should think so. I think we have been four or five months over the present one. I have no wish to have the same experience again.

47. There is too much red tape?—That is about it.

48. *Mr. R. McKenzie.* By this Bill you want us to validate all the privileges you have got?—Yes.

49. They are very large concessions. What is your object in asking us to do that?—We are not miners; we hold the rights under the Mining Act, but we are not using them for mining. We are not a local authority under the Mining Act.

50. Would you be satisfied if clause 5 were struck out and you had to apply again in the same way as under clause 4 of the Bill?—We could not very well make an alteration in that now, because we are committed to two contracts—one for £18,000, and another for £3,500—and the work is going on. The tunnel is about 300 ft. in.

51. You said that there is no mining in this district?—There is none whatever.

52. There has been?—Yes.

53. Is there any probability of there being any there in the future?—Not the slightest.

54. I understood you also to state that you only want water-power from the Taieri and Lee Streams?—Yes.

55. Then why do you want power to take it from anywhere in Otago?—It is usual in these Bills to give such power. Supposing that at some future time we bought out the Waipori Company—

56. For mining purposes?—No, for the same purposes as the private syndicate use the water-rights—for the generation of electricity. They are not used for mining purposes at the present time.

57. We ought to protect the interests of the miners—not particularly the interests of the people of Dunedin or any other place. The law of this colony provides that water on goldfields should be used on the fields primarily—it should be used for gold-mining before it is used for any other purpose. You take powers in clause 4 to take all the water in Otago if you like to do so?—That is an impossibility. In no instance do we take it until after the miners have done with it.

58. What is your special object in asking for this power at all?—We are not miners.

59. You tell us that you only want the Taieri and Lee Streams?—Yes.

60. Is there any objection to our striking this extended-power provision out?—There is none whatever, excepting this: if the Waipori Company came to terms to sell their power to us, we should not be able to purchase it unless that clause is in the Bill.

61. Would it not be time enough for you to provide for that when that contingency might arise?—No, I do not think so, for this reason: you do not know the moment when the Waipori Company might decide to sell; and if you struck that out, before we could possibly buy we should have to get an Act put through Parliament to allow us to buy. In the meantime the opportunity would probably be lost to us.

62. Would it not be better to insert a clause dealing with that one particular water-supply than to take this wide power of going all over Otago?—You could hardly do that, because it would immediately show your hand.

63. I want to know exactly what you require. First, you say you want the rights to the Taieri River and Lee Stream, and then you say you want provision made for taking over the Waipori water-supply. Personally, I might be inclined to help you in getting that; but taking general power over all Otago is a different matter altogether; in fact, it appears to me that you want to monopolize all the water-power in Otago?—That would be an utter impossibility to monopolize the whole, because we could not use any more than a certain distance away. As it stands at present, we are in two or three counties and are dealing with two or three different bodies altogether. The powers are made wide in the Bill to meet that.

64. You want special power now for the Corporation of Dunedin to become the monopolist of all the electrical power that can be got by water in the whole province?—No.

65. Of course, you can always come here and ask us to give you legislation to use the power how you like?—Although we have that power under the Bill, there is another clause which provides that we have to go before the Warden for it. The Warden settles that point. It is not likely that if he would give us all the power we should grab it. There is no intention of grabbing what we do not require.

66. But, supposing you could make out a good case, there would be no reason why you should not?—If the Warden was satisfied I should think that would be sufficient.

67. Supposing you were limited to three sources of supply—the Lee, Taieri, and Waipori Streams—would that suit your purpose for the time being?—Yes, it would; but we could not put the Waipori water-supply in this Bill, because that is held by a private syndicate. It is only in the event of their not being able to utilise their right, and making a reasonable offer to the Corporation, that it would ever come into our hands. If you put it into a Bill you show the company that we think we may want it, and we may never be able to deal with it.

68. I very strongly object to any Corporation getting this power to go all over Otago to get power for generating electricity, and, as far as I can understand, that is really what this provision in the Bill means?—There is no doubt that if the Warden thought the right was required for mining he simply would not grant it.

69. The Warden who granted you the rights mentioned in the Bill had no power to grant them, and you come to us now to validate his action?—I think that is hardly a fair statement. As