

was resolved that you be requested to explain the proposed course of working and indicate on litho. or plan the approximate position of shaft, machinery, buildings, and trains, and that the following are the conditions that the Board propose to recommend the Minister to approve when granting a lease: Term, twenty-one years; royalty, 4d. per ton; rent, 5s. per acre, payable half-yearly. Expenditure in opening and developing within twelve months, £500; twenty-four months, £1,000; thirty-six months, £2,000. Output for the first year, nil; second year, 1,000 tons; third to seventh year, 2,500 tons; eighth to twenty-first year, 5,000 tons."

26. That is not about protection; that is about the lease?—There was no communication beyond those two letters regarding protection.

27. You say that you had protection for six months from the date of your application—the 22nd November, 1902?—Yes.

28. When did you apply for the 1,300 acres?—On the 15th April, 1903.

29. Read us the letter, please?—This is not a letter; it is the receipt for the cash: "1789.—Auckland District Office, 15th April, 1903.—Received from W. S. Meldrum, for Huntly Coal-prospecting Syndicate, by way of deposit on account of application for coal-mining lease of Wahi and Rotoiti Lakes, Waikato County, 1,300 acres, the sum of one hundred and seventy-six pounds." It is signed by T. M. Taylor, Receiver of Land Revenue.

30. That was within the six months?—Yes.

31. What reply did you get to your application other than the receipt—any?—Yes; I think there was an interview. I met the Land Board, and I was told then that there were two other applicants.

32. Have you got that in writing?—There was no note.

33. But you must have had from the Board some answer to your application for a lease?—This was the letter—the one dated the 30th April, 1903, which I have just read.

34. What happened subsequent to the receipt of that?—I was instructed by the Huntly Coal-prospecting Syndicate to go and interview the Commissioner and the Board regarding the conditions, &c., of our lease.

35. Did you at that time expect to get a lease over the 1,300 acres?—We had our application in. I went with the intention of interviewing the Commissioner and the Board, and the trouble arose about there being two other applications in.

36. When did you first hear about these two other applications?—Of course we saw the advertisement in the paper.

37. When was that?—I could not exactly say. The Taupiri Company had an advertisement in the paper, I think, for 410 acres.

38. Had you any communication from the Land Board, stating that other people had applied, at any time whatever?—No, not until I went to interview them; but we saw from the paper that others had applied.

39. What area did your protection cover?—The area that we applied for for prospecting was 100 acres at Lake Wahi and 10 acres at Lake Rotoiti.

40. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] What would be the area of Lake Wahi?—About 1,100 acres.

41. *Mr. J. Allen.*] Did the protection cover 1,100 acres?—We applied for 1,100 acres at Lake Wahi.

42. You had six months' protection?—Yes.

43. Over what area?—I explained the position to the Commissioner. I said, "We are not prepared to go beyond 3s. an acre for the whole of this property until we have proved it. The Waikato Coal and Shipping Company have put holes down in the vicinity, and have given it up, and the lake has been left for about twenty years." I said, "We are prepared to test your property if you will grant us protection."

44. What I want to get at is what area you asked to be protected. You were paying rent for the protected area?—We are paying no rent at all.

45. Can you tell us what area you asked to have protected in your application for protection for prospecting purposes?—We asked for concessions to be granted.

46. What concessions?—To prospect the area. The Commissioner said that we should be trespassing—we wanted some protection. He said, "You send for a tracing—whatever you like—and we will leave the matter in abeyance pending your operations; then you can take up as much as you like."

47. Where is the evidence of that; have you got the tracing?— ?

48. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] That was the conversation?—Yes. This letter shows what they did: "Department of Lands and Survey, District Office, Auckland, 2nd September, 1902.—*Mr. G. Rossenbeck, Huntly.*—Coal lease, Wahi Lake: In reference to your application for a coal-mining lease under the Wahi Lake, I have to inform you that the Land Board have resolved to adjourn the consideration pending the result of boring operations, which the Board understand are now in progress. Please inform the Board at your earliest convenience if you decide to go on with the matter." Nothing definite was done until we got protection. Then there was the letter of the 30th October, which I have read, asking for information regarding the boring operations. We informed the Department of the result of the boring. Here is a letter to *Mr. Mueller*, dated the 22nd November, 1902: "DEAR SIR,—Having received yours of the 19th November, I, on behalf of syndicate, beg to thank you for same. I now wish to inform you of the result of boring operations to date on Section 48, which has not been too satisfactory. We therefore request you to grant us a further extension of protection," and so on. We sent the Commissioner the result of the boring.

49. *Mr. J. Allen.*] What I want to get at is whether you can tell me the area of ground that was protected?—There was nothing granted to us.

50. No specific area?—No area granted.