

tion for 400 acres, and, long after, the syndicate made application for the whole lake. Now they are asking that the whole area shall be leased to them. They have no legal rights, and the attitude which they are taking up is an extraordinary one. They have in area B a much larger area granted to them than the company, although their application was only for 100 acres. The company has recently purchased a property between Wahi Lake and its workings, at a cost of £15,500, and they are now extending the workings in the direction of Lake Wahi [Indicated on plan], and it is the intention to open up an endless haulage roadway which will enable the company to work area A, Wahi Lake, from the present shaft.

153. *Mr. Moss.*] Is this the 100-acre area that was first applied for by the syndicate [Area indicated on plan]?—Yes.

154. After they applied for that, your company, I understand, pegged all round them?—No. We took an area from one given point to another. I think it was about in a line like that [Indicated], but I cannot say exactly where it was laid off not having a plan.

155. After you had pegged round the syndicate applied for the same ground?—No; they applied for the whole lake. But that was long after the company had applied—some eight months after.

156. Who got the piece that the syndicate first applied for?—They got it, and a large additional area besides—in fact, some 200 acres of the area which was applied for by the company prior to the syndicate applying for the whole lake is included in area B granted to the syndicate, although up to that time they had only applied for 100 acres.

157. They were the first applicants for the 100 acres, and they have got it?—Yes, and a big area besides. They have a larger area granted to them than the company, although they only applied for 100 acres and the company 400-odd acres.

158. *Mr. Leather.*] Do you remember, Mr. Alison, when we first started boring operations?—No.

159. Where was the nearest place to the lake at which you put down your holes prior to our starting operations?—I do not know when you started operations, but on Mr. Hetherington's ground near Rotoiti a bore had been put down many years ago, and had proved the ground to be coal-bearing. That the company had full knowledge of.

160. Are you aware that the Waikato Coal Company were looking for coal, and would have started operations if they had found it?—The company is long since defunct. It has nothing to do with this matter at all. It was absorbed in the Taupiri Coal Company.

161. Are you aware that twenty years ago the Waikato Coal Company was looking for coal close to Rotoiti?—I cannot give you any information about what happened twenty years ago.

162. Is it not a fact that you got into trouble in your mine shortly after we started operations by striking a fault?—Faults are met with in every coal-mine from time to time. We encounter them continuously. A fault is met with, you work through it, and are into good coal again.

163. Is it not a fact that you have put certain holes down here [Place indicated on plan] and got nothing?—No; it is not a fact. At every bore we put down we got good coal.

164. How is it, then, that Mr. Gilberd withdrew his pipes on several occasions and got nothing?—I do not know what he did, but I know that every one of the bores he put down for the company proved that coal was there. But that has no bearing upon the question before the Committee. We put a bore down by the side of the lake, and went through two seams of coal, 12 ft. and 15 ft. thick respectively.

165. Is it not a fact that he could not get through the boulder-bed on three or four occasions?—That is not so in connection with bores for the Taupiri Company.

166. Do you mean to say it took a man six months to bore through sand?—I do not know what time it took. I know that the bores proved the coal in the seams of 12 ft. and 15 ft. to be of first-class quality.

167. Are you sure it was of first-class quality?—I only know by the report. I was not present to see the coal. The mine-manager reported.

168. Are you aware that the analysis of the top seam was less than the analysis of the bottom seam as regards carbons?—I do not know. I will not enter into the question of the quality of the coal. The company desire that area because they are quite satisfied it is coal-bearing, and they made application for it because of their knowledge on the continuity of the coal-measures.

169. Has not the Taupiri Company the right to work all this property here [Indicated on plan]?—We have a large area of land. We purchased a large area recently.

170. Could you give us an approximate estimate of the time it would take to work out that area, say, at the rate of 400 or 500 tons a day, if it was all coal-bearing?

*Mr. R. McKenzie:* What is the area?

*Mr. Leather:* Close on 1,000 acres.

*Witness:* The company has recently acquired for £15,500—a large sum of money—the right to mine a given area of coal, a considerable portion of which is between the company's mine and Lake Wahi.

171. *Mr. Leather.*] Do you know of any property besides this that the syndicate has acquired in this vicinity?—I have given no attention to what the syndicate has done. I only know what has been done with reference to Lake Wahi and in connection with the business of the Taupiri Coal Company.

172. Are you aware that the area over which the syndicate have obtained the right to mine coal from private persons amounts only to 65 acres, which they have acquired to place their plant upon?—I do not know anything about their business. They are only a syndicate and do not publish any information, and I am not in their confidence.

173. Is it not a fact that the Taupiri Coal Company's representative went to the Land Office to acquire the whole of Lake Wahi shortly after we were there?—Not that I know of. The whole