

30. Do you sometimes share a cargo with anybody else?—No.

31. Do you say you only get the whole cargo of any particular shipment?—I can always dispose of the whole cargo of any particular ship.

32. That is not the point. Does the company send coal in a vessel some of which coal is consigned to you and some to somebody else?—The only time when there was any difficulty in that was in former days when they had a contract with Foxton. I used to get what proportions I wanted, but in smaller quantities.

33. When they send vessels to Wanganui do they send part of the cargo to you and part to other people?—The coal at Wanganui is always landed in their own steamers at Castlecliff in quantities of 2,000 tons, and in that case they bring up a certain amount of Paparoa coal.

34. They do not go to the wharf?—No, unload at Castlecliff.

35. You only have a certain portion of the coal?—That is so. There is not anything like the amount of coal required in Wanganui, apart from the railways, that there is in Palmerston.

36. Would it surprise you to know that the Railway Department has had great difficulty in getting coal from the Blackball Company?—I do not know, but the point is that the coal the railways require is all screened coal. The coal chiefly used by the suppliers outside is small coal, and consequently the more there is for the railways the more there is for me.

37. And therefore the fact that the railways used to get Blackball coal at Foxton was helpful to you, was it not?—You mean, in that I could get in smaller quantities if I required it?

38. Yes?—Yes, sometimes.

39. And is it not a fact that most of the vessels that went to Foxton with Blackball coal had on board some for the Railway Department and some for you?—Yes, that is so.

40. Have you had whole cargoes consigned to yourself?—Yes, repeatedly. Most of it was.

41. Up to what tonnage?—Up to 180 tons. That is the largest steamer that can get in there now. It used to be 350 tons.

42. What is the largest cargo consigned to yourself?—180 tons. That is the biggest steamer I could get.

43. At any time?—Yes.

44. For how many years back are you speaking?—I have only been in business on my own account for four years back. Before that I was manager of the West Coast Company. The largest steamer I could get in was 180 tons. I could have taken more if they could have given it to me.

45. That is not only within the last few months, but within the last few years?—The matter is getting worse, because I cannot get a steamer in now. They will not touch it.

46. What are the Blackball Company's steamers?—They never come near Foxton; they are too large.

47. What were the vessels that used to bring coal for you to Foxton?—Chiefly the Anchor Company's boats—the "Kennedy" and "Kaitoa."

48. Do they go to Foxton at all now?—Very rarely.

49. They trade still between Wellington and the west coast of the South Island, do they not?—Yes.

50. And find plenty to do without going to Foxton?—Of course, I am not in a position to say.

51. Is the trade in this district for Waikato coal increasing?—Not for steam—it is for household coal. The railway brings down the Waikato coal for 11s., and it costs us 5s. to bring it up here from Foxton.

52. You get Newcastle coal through Wanganui?—Yes.

53. What size steamers bring it down?—I think the "Inga"—500 tons.

54. So that even if the harbour at Foxton was improved you would not expect to get those vessels going up there?—I prefer not to express an opinion as to what the harbour improvements would be. I understand you have an engineer's report on that.

55. The Railway Department brings the Waikato coal down to Palmerston?—Yes, at 12s. a ton now.

56. *The Chairman.*] What do they charge as freight on Waikato coal here?—It used to be 11s. 7d., but there is 10 per cent. added on now. That would be 300 miles, and the charge was 5s. 2d. for bringing it the twenty-four miles from Foxton.

57. *Mr. Myers.*] Can you say what Waikato coal sells at here retail?—No, I am afraid I could not. I am rather out of touch with the retail trade—my trade is entirely wholesale; but I could get the information.

58. You do not know how it compares with the price of West Coast coal?—It is considerably cheaper. You cannot use the Taupiri coals for steam purposes.

59. But it is coming into competition here with the West Coast coal?—The general run here prefer the West Coast coal.

60. Do you know the Railway Department uses Waikato coal for steam purposes?—I am not in a position to say what the Department does.

61. At all events, we may take it that for household purposes the Waikato coal is competing in Palmerston with the West Coast coal?—Yes.

62. And successfully?—Yes. The Blackball Company at present is supplying one-half of the people in the district.

63. *Mr. Weston.*] The telegrams and letters you have produced show that you cannot get freights?—Yes.

64. The Anchor Shipping Company dodge the Foxton Port?—Yes, and Levin and Co. do not like to let the "Awahou" come in.

65. I notice in the telegrams and letters they always speak of engaging freight for the next spring tide?—Yes.