

cost of transport, 7s. 8d. The point is this: they have to pay a large price for their iron-ore and limestone, and they pay less for their coal than we would have to pay in New Zealand: it costs them 12s. 6d. per ton. It has been said we would have to import coke. We would not have to do so. We would bring in coal to the works at Parapara, and with converter coke-ovens we would get all the by-products, which would reduce the cost considerably. With regard to the Otamatara coal at Parapara, I lay before the Committee a report by Mr. Harley E. Hooper. It shows about $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of sulphur. He also gives an analysis of the limestone at Parapara. The only disadvantage we are at is the coal. Supposing the coal costs 20s. per ton delivered, it would be a profitable proposition, because the by-products would more than pay for the treatment of the coal into coke, besides getting all the spent heat.

To the Chairman.] The company has a lease of the Parapara Iron-mine. We obtained the lease from the Cadman Estate. Mr. Cadman had contracted to commence the work of iron-smelting at Parapara. The company took over Mr. Cadman's liability. Up to the present we have spent about £60,000.

Mr. Forbes.] In what way?—We have washed the overburden from different outcrops; we have railway formation, wharf, and, not knowing how to profitably spend our money, we built roads and metalled them for the benefit of ourselves and the county. We also put a bridge across the Parapara, and we have water-power. On top of that we have put in two long tunnels, about 1,000 ft. each, at 150 ft. and 250 ft. below the top face. When Dr. Bell gave his report he said to us, "I will allow you 40 ft. below the outcrops, but not between one outcrop and another." He would allow nothing for in between. We wanted to prove that the outcrops were joined up together, and sluiced off the overburden. In some places we went down 30 ft. or 35 ft. to prove that they were continuous. In two different places we put in tunnels, and they proved the ore to be solid within 30 ft. of water-level.

The Chairman.] At any rate, you have a lease and you enjoy protection?—Yes.

Protection for how long?—For six months after peace.

And then you are supposed to commence work?—Yes.

And what if you do not start?—We are going to start. Of course, we want to get something from the Government.

There is a bonus provided for?—That is no good to any one. We will commence the work by hook or by crook, but we want the Government to help us.

What are you looking to the Government for?—We approached the Minister first of all and asked him to take up the matter of a first-class expert. Mr. Blow objects to experts, and says we have had too many; but I do not know that we have ever had a real engineering expert on the ground, or a metallurgist, who would tell us how to lay off the works or what they would cost.

In what way do you want the Government to assist you to get on with the business?—They could assist us in several ways. One way is a bonus, but I do not think we have a right to ask for it. The price of pig iron is so good and all iron commodities are so high it would be futile. I suggest that the Government should help in this way: If we can raise so-much money they could help us in the shape of debentures.

Would you issue the debentures to the Government?

Mr. Bridge: I may say that I personally addressed a letter to the Prime Minister before his departure to England, and that letter contains our proposals with regard to what Mr. Smythe is now explaining to the Chairman. I will put a copy of the letter in as evidence.

The Chairman: Cannot you state the proposals to the Committee now?

Mr. Bridge: I could not state them offhand, and in this matter we must be particular about the facts. I may say that we might want some assistance to get a capable officer from Australia to report on the works.

The Chairman: Is that in the letter?

Mr. Bridge: No; that is a subsequent matter.

The Chairman: In addition to what is in the letter you want the Government to assist you by obtaining an expert?

Mr. Bridge: Yes; and we would like him to come from the Broken Hill Company. He might be an expert recommended by Mr. Delprat.

The Chairman: Are your proposals practical proposals for the commencement of the work?

Mr. Bridge: Yes, they are.

Mr. Luke (to witness).] In your opinion, would it be a good thing for the Dominion and everybody concerned to send a shipload of 1,000 tons to the Old Country and get a proper test of the ore there?—You could not do it by sending 1,000 tons. What you could do is to send 100 tons to your foundry in Wellington.

You could not make a substantial test in that way. It would burn out the furnace?—We would put up a furnace 30 ft. high.

Mr. Sidey.] Is the witness aware that in the evidence in Wellington it was stated that there was less than 50 per cent. of iron-ore?—It is a high-grade brown hæmatite.

Do you think that the expert from the ironworks in Australia would be a satisfactory man to report on Parapara? Is it not a rival work?—It is. Of course, they are big people.

The Chairman.] The report might not be altogether unbiassed?—They have just found a first-class man for the Queensland Government.

The Chairman: We will resume the hearing of this matter on the 3rd March.

R. J. SCOTT, Professor of Engineering, Canterbury College, examined.

For many years those in charge of the laboratories at the School of Engineering here have carried out a large amount of experimental work, chiefly at the request of manufacturers and