THE EVOLUTION OF THE
COAL MINING COMMUNITY
OF DENNISTON

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirement for the Degree
of
Master of Arts in History
in the
University of Canterbury

by

ELIZABETH A. SMALLHOLME-FRASER

University of Canterbury
1978
CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS iii

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS vi

PREFACE vii

CHAPTER I: THE INDUSTRY

The Pioneering Period 1
The First Five Years 7
'Down the Pit' 13

CHAPTER II: THE COMPANY

Economic Milieu and Colliery Investment 22
Marketing and Monopoly 29
The Management 36

CHAPTER III: PEOPLE AND PLACE

Denniston - A Mining Community? 42
The People 46
The First Five Years 55
A Victorian Colliery Village - Denniston 1885-1889 66

CHAPTER IV: LABOUR

John Lomas and the Denniston Miners' Union 80
Confrontation, November '84 to July '85 85
1885-9 Consolidation on the 'Coast 93
The Maritime Council 'Era' 100
The Maritime Strike 105

CHAPTER V: DENNISTON AND WESTPORT

The Economic Impact 115
Politics and Coal 119
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER VI</td>
<td>EPILOGUE</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td></td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES I</td>
<td>The Shareholding of the Westport Colliery Company</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES II</td>
<td>The Directors of the Westport Coal Company</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES III</td>
<td>Infant Mortality on Denniston</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES IV</td>
<td>John Lomas; After 1890</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES ON SOURCES 156

BIBLIOGRAPHY 158
### LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Denniston and District</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>&quot;The eighth wonder of the world&quot;</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Only the lower incline is shown in this photograph. The upper incline was actually steeper!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The Directors of the Westport Coal Company.</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Iron Bridge and the rope-road These photographs bear witness to the substantial work that was undertaken by the WCC. One section of the mines was named after the Iron Bridge. Falls of snow were not uncommon during the winter on Denniston.</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The plateau</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is a much more recent aerial photograph. Note the huge pile of slack beside the bins.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The Coalfields of Great Britain</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The miners' homes</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The people</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The occasion for this photograph was possibly the annual school prize-giving, as the children are all in their Sunday finery. Most of the children have bare feet, but the 'wee chap' in the bottom right-hand corner still looks most uncomfortable.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIGURE 9. A pioneer family
The stark lines of this home could not be concealed by a flower garden in these circumstances. Look for father at the mouth of the mine in Figure 12.

FIGURE 10. The school house
'Promenade on Sunday'
The fashionable couple out strolling are in sharp contrast to the desolation that surrounds them.

FIGURE 11. The Denniston Track

FIGURE 12. At the mine mouth
Their clean faces would indicate that the miners were on their way into the mine. Look for the young boys among them - the lad near the centre looks younger than twelve.

FIGURE 13. The men on Denniston
According to June A. Wood, in *Victorian New Zealanders*, cloth caps were most commonly worn by the working classes.

FIGURE 14. Westport citizens
This posed photograph was taken in November, 1891. They had come, as guests of the Westport Coal Company, to witness the firing of the first shot at the Gravity Creek colliery. The 'explorer' left of centre has dressed for the occasion. This fashionable group is very different to the crowd in the previous photograph.
FIGURE 15. Development work at Granity Creek
The footbridge would seem to be in keeping with the other development work in this wild setting.

FIGURE 16. The 'Rec'
The recreation ground was prepared by the residents in 1894 and at last a proper venue was provided for cricket, soccer, and rugby.

FIGURE 17. 'Driving'
This photograph illustrates the growing degree of mechanization within the mine. It was probably posed as the men are not wearing safety helmets.

FIGURE 18. The new track
The construction of the new track and the advent of the horse and dray on Denniston set the seal on the nineteenth century.
**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AJHR</td>
<td>Appendix to the Journal of the House of Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMA</td>
<td>Amalgamated Miners' Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMLA</td>
<td>Amalgamated Miners' and Labourers' Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BM</td>
<td>Buller Miner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRA</td>
<td>Grey River Argus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT</td>
<td>Lyttelton Times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZPD</td>
<td>New Zealand Parliamentary Debates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCC</td>
<td>Westport Coal Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WES</td>
<td>Westport Evening Star</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WN</td>
<td>Westport News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS</td>
<td>Westport Star</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WT</td>
<td>Westport Times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTS</td>
<td>Westport Times and Star</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This study concerns the birth of the coal industry and a new community in the Buller where the entrepreneurs and emigrants were faced with an untouched and rigorous environment. The location for Denniston was remote and hazardous. The coalfield was perched on a wind-swept plateau, 1,800 feet above sea-level, and connected with the outside world by an inclined railway.

The development of unionism within that community is also examined for Denniston spawned a labour leader who organized the 'Coast and became an inaugural member of the Maritime Council. The advent of the Seamens' Union has been researched, and there was clearly a need for a study of the origins of unionism among the coal-miners in the Buller. Similarly, while much is known of J.A. Millar, John Lomas' important role in New Zealand labour history has yet received scant attention. The Denniston coalfield seemed to afford an excellent opportunity to examine the relative influence of British example and New Zealand experience in the development of New Zealand unionism.

Related to the growth of unionism on Denniston is the nature of the overall effect of the coal industry on the Buller region. Coal was to provide a new staple for a local economy which was still living in the afterglow of the gold rushes. It could be expected however, that
the established community of Westport would be ambivalent in its reaction to the arrival of the coalminers. Merchants and businessmen welcomed the additional revenue the coal industry promised but were fearful of the class tensions which would accompany the changes.

The story of Denniston would not have been written without the support of so many people. Many of the photographs came from the collection of Mr. W. Miller, who consented to their reproduction. The others were contributed by Mr. G. Fraser. Mrs. V. Willson of Westport, made the family copy of her father's 'Recollections' available to me. Karen Smallholme worked to my deadline draughting the maps, as did the typist, Maida Fletcher, to whose conscientious approach I owe the presentation of this thesis. My tutor, Dr. Len Richardson, did everything he possibly could to assist me, and I would like to make particular mention of the efforts of the late P.R. May in the field of West Coast research, who helped to fire my imagination initially. Lastly, special thanks are extended to my husband, Iain Fraser, and to my parents.
DENNISTON & DISTRICT
CHAPTER 1

THE INDUSTRY

THE PIONEERING PERIOD

The Buller coalfield was inaccessible and difficult to work. Although the quality and extent of the coal prompted the formation of a host of small companies, these hopeful entrepreneurs soon had their hopes dashed. The coal which could be mined at the low levels was isolated from the main field. A huge capital investment would be required to bring coal down from a plateau 1,800 feet above sea level.

Sir Julius von Haast discovered the first seam of coal in the Buller in 1860. It lay at this high level, on the Mount Rochfort Plateau. He named the coal seam indicated by a huge outcrop of coal, the Coalbrookdale. The extent of the coal reserves was promptly and systematically assessed. By 1872, Dr. James Hector had traced the seam from the Mount Rochfort plateau to the Ngakawau River. It appeared to be endless, and he estimated that one block alone contained over seven million tons of coal. The quality also, was encouraging. In 1875 samples of Coalbrookdale coal were sent to England for trial at the Woolwich dockyard. It out-

(1) R.J. Meyer, Coaling from the Clouds, p. 9-10.
(2) AJHR, 1872, E. 10A, p. 2.
performed its rivals. It was praised further for its versatility. It was strong and clean-burning, and could be used for both steam and household purposes. The extent and quality of Coalbrookdale coal encouraged a flood of speculative applications for coal leases when the district was proclaimed a coal reserve. It also prompted the Government to make provision for railway access to the coalfield.

Tenders were called for the Westport to Ngakawau railway as early as August 1873. Work on the survey line began early in the New Year, but it took two years before the line was completed to Junction, (later re-named Fairdown). The contract for the second section of the line, from Junction to Waimangaroa, was advertised in February 1875 and the first regular train from Westport to Waimangaroa ran on 5 August, 1876.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>lbs water evaporation by lb coal at a constant temperature feed water of 100°F</th>
<th>percentage of clinkers ash mixed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average North of England</td>
<td>8.25</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North of England</td>
<td>8.72</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh</td>
<td>9.11</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>8.298</td>
<td>2.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalbrookdale, N.Z.</td>
<td>9.83</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) Prospectus of The Westport Coal Company Limited, Appendix, p. 3.
(4) AJHR, 1876, A. 3, p. 119.
(5) Meyer, p. 17.
(6) Meyer, p. 27.
The first attempt to exploit the coalfield was doomed to failure. It resulted from the discovery of a seam of coal on the north bank of the Waimangaroa Gorge by a party of goldminers. The seam became known as Sim's Drive, and Mulholland and party, all local men, joined together to work the lease. Their Wellington Coal Mining Company was locally-based and an attempt at small-scale working. They first constructed a section of railway line to link the Wellington Mine with the main line at Waimangaroa. The Company mined 948 tons of coal in their first year of operation. The quality of the coal was disappointing, and it did not improve as expected when the tunnel was driven deeper into the hillside. Unlike the coal at the higher level, this coal was too soft to stand the rigours of transportation. In an effort to remain in business, the promoters constructed six coke ovens. The absence of any demand for coke finally forced the Wellington Coal Mining Company out of business, and the property was sold at auction in 1880, to Captain W. Robert Williams, a Wellington ship-owner and coal-merchant. The experience of the Wellington Company made other developers aware that successful mining operations would have to take place at the higher level. The Buller coalfield was not a small man's field.

The Government was concerned that the other leaseholders held their ground merely for speculative purposes,

(7) Meyer, p. 28
(8) AJHR, 1878, E. 1, Appendix M, p. 82.
(9) Meyer, p. 31.
and a Colliery Reserve Commission was convened to enquire into the extent of their investment. The mood of the promoters in 1875 was unrealistically optimistic. John Corr, a Westport merchant, had an interest in both the Mulholland and Overhagen leases;

...We can raise sufficient money for the purpose; £5,000 or £6,000, it is thought, will be sufficient to bring coal into market from Mulholland's; but we are going to raise a capital of £40,000, so as to be prepared for all emergencies.

Another block of land was licensed to three promoters representing Dunedin commercial interests, and they were endeavouring to float a company in London. The adjacent lease was held jointly by H. Cable and D. Drummond, Dunedin-based runholders. Their company had twenty shareholders within New Zealand, and it was intended that it be managed by James Rochfort, Provincial Engineer. John Munro, a Westport auctioneer and later Member for Buller, represented the fifth concern. This company was still being formed in 1876. Each of the twenty shareholders, it was envisaged, would contribute one thousand pounds. Shares were being offered in Wellington, Dunedin and Melbourne.

The Commissioners were disappointed that few leaseholders were ready to begin work. Heeding their advice the government insisted that once railway access was established, the leases must be developed or they would be cancelled. This threat, coupled with the experience of the ill-fated

(10) AJHR, 1876, A. 3, p. 122.
(11) Ibid.
Wellington Coal Mining Company prompted a complicated series of amalgamation which spelt the end of the small man's involvement on the Buller coalfield. Two large companies were formed. The Koranui Coal Mining Company grew from a merger between the interests represented by John Munro, and Captain W.R. Williams, the new owner of the Wellington property. The Westport Colliery Company resulted from a more comprehensive amalgamation. It was a Dunedin-based enterprise, characteristic of the "new and innovative upper-middle class". The first meeting took place in March 1878, and was attended exclusively by men prominent in the commercial circles of Dunedin. A large initial capital investment would be required. It was decided that the nominal capital of the company would be £100,000 divided into 10,000 shares of ten pounds each. The Buller coalfield was an exciting proposition. The huge extent and consistently high quality of the Coalbrookdale seam was encouraging. No shafts or expensive ventilation system would be necessary as tunnels could be driven directly into

the hillside to mine the coal. The caution was the lack of available timber and the access. The Westport Colliery Company had to devise some way to haul the coal down the mountainside.
The transportation problems encountered by the Westport Colliery Company were solved in a bold and imaginative way. Young Bros., Civil Engineers, designed a self-acting incline to lower the coal down from the plateau. It was a grandiose scheme. A lower incline began 170 feet above sea level and rose 875 feet. It had an average grade of 1 in 4. Trucks were exchanged between the upper and lower inclines at the Middle Brake, where there was only a slight slope. The upper incline rose much more steeply. One section was notorious for a grade of 1 in 1.1/3. The inclines worked on a system of counterbalance; the descending loaded wagon pulling up the empty one. Signals were exchanged between the brakesmen and then the full wagon was lowered by a steel rope, four inches in circumference, and controlled by the brakes erected at the head of each incline. The incline was a source of pride to the local people, who dubbed it "the eighth wonder of the world".

The incline solved the problem of the elevation but the company was faced with much more development work to bring Coalbrookdale coal to market. A branch line had to

---

(1) The Westport (or Buller) Coal-Field of New Zealand Schedule F, p. 12.
Clipped from the New Zealand Press, Nov. 1879.
be constructed from the base of the inclines to connect with the Wellington Company's railway line. Sidings were laid at the foot of the incline and then Conn's Creek had to be spanned before the branch line could be linked with the inclines. On the plateau also, the Company faced a large capital outlay. Screens were constructed near the brow of the hill. Leading on to them over a large viaduct, was the horse tramway, which connected the coal face to the inclines. The tramway was travelled by coal tubs, each of which carried $\frac{1}{2}$ tons of coal. To reach the Coalbrookdale coal seam the Company had to tunnel through a lesser seam, which they planned to work in the meantime. High quality bituminous coal was mined from the Fisher Mine, but the coal seam was only three to four feet thick, and therefore, work was labour-intensive. The development work proceeded rapidly and the last spike was driven at the top of the incline on 24 October, 1879.

It took another six months before the mine, now known as the Banbury, was in regular work. Sixty tons of coal was lowered down the incline in May 1880. The Mines Department recorded an output of 3,892 tons for that year from the Banbury Mine. Twenty-nine men worked underground, and seven on the surface. The financial strain of such an extensive

(2) Ibid.
(3) AJHR, 1879, Session I, H. 16, pp. 20-1.
(4) Meyer, p. 42.
(5) AJHR, 1880, H. 18, p. 13.
operation proved too great for the Westport Colliery Company and the company was reorganized in 1881. The Westport Coal Company had a wider shareholding and greater capital.

Once the Westport Coal Company (WCC) could produce coal and rail it to Waimangaroa, further obstacles to efficient transportation became apparent. The bar on the Buller River was frequently too shallow for the loaded colliers. 7 There was no storage space for coal at the wharf and the Government had provided too few railway wagons for the trade. It was a vicious circle of inefficiency. Shipping would be held up by bad weather or a shallow bar, the available rolling stock would be rapidly filled, and the mine would have to close down until the railway wagons could be emptied and returned to Denniston. The WCC directorate complained strongly 8 and pressured the government to improve the port with every means at their disposal. Their output of 48,348 tons was the largest from any colliery in the colony in 1882 9 and they felt that the WCC warranted special consideration.

The WCC plant was improved in 1883. An "Automatic Indicator and Alarm" patented by R.B. Denniston, a former manager, was fitted to the wagons used on the incline. The inclines could now be worked at night, and the risk of accident was lessened in fog or low cloud. 10 The horses

(7) WT 28 Feb 1882.
(8) AJHR, 1882, I. 6, pp. 10-17.
(10) WT 7 July 1882.
were replaced by an endless chain, which was powered by boilers fitted in an engine house. Larger screens and railway sidings were constructed at the Brake Head on the brow of the hill. At the Middle Brake the sidings were re-organized to allow the upper and lower inclines to be worked simultaneously. The grade towards the bottom of the upper incline was improved to allow greater control of the loaded wagons. Previously, when a loaded wagon broke free, everyone had to run for their lives, and the runaway wagon usually damaged the rails and put the incline out of operation.

By November 1883, the work was completed and coal lowering began again. The year's production was 13,351 tons less than the previous year, but the increased efficiency more than compensated for the time lost. The Westport Times marveled in January 1884 that;

...On Friday the biggest record yet attained was made on the Westport Incline when 54 trucks, containing 390 tons of coal were lowered. 28 of these trucks were brought down at one time - the longest train yet run down the line....

It was unfortunate for the WCC that such vastly improved efficiency coincided with an extremely shallow bar on the Buller River. As a result the WCC colliers short-carried

(11) EM 4 Apr 1883.
(12) Ibid.
(13) AJHR, 1884, Session I, C. 5, p. 28.
(14) WT 19 Jan 1884.
26,191 tons, worth £13,000 to the Company. 15 The WCC still reached a record production level however; the Banbury Mine produced 74,187 tons of coal. 16

In July 1884, the tunnel was driven through and coal was mined from the Coalbrookdale seam. 17 The tram­line was extended into this new portion of the mine, and the WCC erected a new brake drum at the head of the incline to cope with the larger tonnage now anticipated. The development work was finally complete and the Company was poised to mine the new thick coal. It was not to be. Work was stopped in December by an industrial dispute which put the mine out of operation for twenty weeks. When regular work was resumed it was discovered that the haulage system could not cope with the larger tonnage. The chain fractured as often as thirty times a day. 18 The bar on the Buller River silted up and coal prices dropped alarmingly. 19 All these difficulties combined to halve the annual production and put the WCC into an unenviable position at the end of its first five years.

(15) AJHR, 1885, C-4C, p. 7.
(16) AJHR, 1885, C. 4, p. 13.
(17) WT 29 July 1884.
(18) AJHR, 1886, C-4C, p. 3.
(19) WT 2 Mar 1886.
'DOWN THE PIT'

(a) The Mine at Work

After 1884 the Banbury and Coalbrookdale coal seams were worked simultaneously. In both, the management adopted the 'bord and pillar' system of working. In a coal mine the underground organization is directed towards the most efficient method of transporting the coal from the face, where the miners are working, to the surface. In each mine a main tunnel was driven directly into the hillside, and smaller tunnels, or headings, were cut at right angles to this main tunnel. This system of working was sufficient to mine the whole of the smaller Banbury seam but in the Coalbrookdale where the coal seam was much larger, bords were cut at right angles to the headings. This allowed a larger area to be worked.

Two miners worked in each bord. By the light of their castor-oil lamps, they normally excavated three feet at the bottom of the coal seam, and then used their picks or gunpowder to drop the coal. Once the coal was down and the roof timbered if necessary, the miners shovelled the coal into one of the waiting coal tubs. The tub was marked with the number of the miner who filled it, and then trundled to one of the sidings or "shunts" in the main tunnel, and exchanged for empties.

---

(2) EM 4 Apr 1883.
(3) Ibid.
became more extensive this job was taken over by a trucker. The men preferred to work in the Coalbrookdale Mine so places were ballotted to give every man a fair chance of a good work place. The sheer size of the Coalbrookdale seam meant that the most dangerous part of mining, dropping the coal, had to be repeated less often. Where the seam was this thick, the miners worked with a rough kind of coal bench, well behind the face.

The endless chain haulage system was extended into the Coalbrookdale mine but its length and great weight caused the chain to break repeatedly. Each time it was extended to keep pace with the coal workings another boiler had to be added to compensate for the extra weight of the chain. In 1886 when the coal workings outran the surface haulage system yet once again, the WCC decided to replace the chain with an endless rope. The Coalbrookdale was now New Zealand's largest and most modern colliery. The endless rope allowed the production to be improved to such an extent that 115,942 tons of coal were produced in 1887.

(b) The Miners' Earnings

The nature of mining and the insecurity of earnings combined to harden the attitude of the miners towards the...
employers. The coalminers on Denniston were paid on a contract basis. For most of the decade 1880-1890, 2/10d. was the tonnage rate paid by the WCC for unscreened coal. In theory, a coalminer could hew six tons in twelve or thirteen hours. His projected weekly wage over a five day, sixty hour week was, therefore, £4. 5s. This amount compares very favourably with the wages paid to other industrial workers in New Zealand in 1890. For instance: meat workers received about £1. 14s; gold or quartz miners averaged £1. 18s; and workers in iron and brass foundries earned about £1. 16s. a week.

Real wages, however, were tied to the cost of living on Denniston. The cost of living on the Denniston plateau was high because of the isolation of the township. Complaints about the "exorbitant prices of the necessaries of life" were constant. The new inhabitants were appalled, as James Ward recalls:

...things were much dearer at Denniston because everything had to be bought at a dearer rate than in the North....
Nothing could be grown, there was no soil at Denniston, only rocks, and sorely did we miss the splendid garden plots and the small orchard we had left behind at Thames...

The cost of living on Denniston minimised the benefits of the higher wages.

In practice, the miners' wages varied a great deal. Wages were affected by the productivity of the mine, the

---

(8) AJHR, 1876, A. 3, p. 120.
(9) J.B. Condliffe, New Zealand in the Making, p. 166.
(10) AJHR, 1889, I. 6, p. 38.
(11) WT 17 Apr 1883.
number of coalminers employed, the demand for coal, the
efficiency of the plant, the state of the Buller River bar,
the number of railway wagons on the Waimangaroa to Westport
railway line, and the weather. The basic wage rate was in
fact, a misleading indication of the coalminers' true
earnings. It is possible to estimate the yearly amount
earned by the colliery workers from the total tonnage,
taking the cost of coal hewing and other labour at six
shillings a ton. Over a period of a decade, only in
three years did the weekly wages reach half the projected
wage rate. The miners' actual earnings varied constantly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Tonnage</th>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
<th>Tons Per Man</th>
<th>Yearly Earnings</th>
<th>Per Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>48,348</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>£110.</td>
<td>£2. 5s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>34,997</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>£75.</td>
<td>£1. 9s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>74,187</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>£106.</td>
<td>£2. 1s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>+ -</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>75,609</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>£100.</td>
<td>£2. 0s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>115,942</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>£162.</td>
<td>£3. 2s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>130,170</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>£95.</td>
<td>£1. 17s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>163,015</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>£119.</td>
<td>£2. 6s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>+ -</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ Figures distorted by strikes

The fluctuation in total tonnage was of greatest
concern to the coal hewers. The other colliery workers were
paid day rates, ten shillings a day for every day worked.

(13) AJHR, 1888, C. 2, p. 4.
(14) AJHR, Annual Mines Department Statistics.
The tonnage rate mined per man dropped in 1883 because the WCC stopped all work to revise the surface haulage system. It was caused in 1888 by the Company employing 150 extra miners in anticipation of a rush of coal orders due to the Newcastle Coalminers' Strike. The coal boom did not take place and as the mine was now over-staffed, the men were reduced to working only seven or eight days in the fortnight.

The weekly wage was also affected by the nature of the miner's workplace. The coal seams varied in thickness and quality; the disparity between the Banbury and Coalbrookdale seams has already been noted. Under these circumstances the miners cavilled or ballotted for work places, so as to give every miner a chance of working the easiest places. In 1884 different rates were recognized by the management for the Banbury and Coalbrookdale coal seams. Ventilation was a constant problem, and safety, a basic consideration. Work was slow in the Banbury seam because water seepage made the roof unsafe, and a lot of timbering was necessary. The coalminers justifiably took great pride in the way that they coped with all these difficulties in the course of the day's work.

Employment was intermittent as well as hazardous. Coalbrookdale coal was ideal for household usage. The demand for the coal was strongest in the winter months. The men'

(15) BM 4 Apr 1883.
(16) AJHR, 1889, I. 6, p. 37.
(17) WT 16 Dec 1884.
could expect work to pick up after Christmas as coal agents stocked up for the winter. The periods of severe competition from Newcastle coal reduced the demand for Coalbrookdale coal, and consequently the number of working days in the fortnight. The actual process of marketing the coal also affected the wages paid. There was no market for slack coal. It was a problem for the WCC, and thousands of tons of slack were dumped, some down a chasm in the mine, and the rest over the side of the hill at the Brake Head. Whether the miners were paid for unscreened or just round coal, and at what point their tonnage would be recorded, were matters of dispute between miners and management. Generally on Denniston, coalminers were paid a flat rate for unscreened coal. The WCC departed from this method of payment in 1884 in an effort to reduce the miners' wages, and their action caused the only large-scale industrial stoppage at Denniston before the Maritime Strike in 1890.

Intermittency was caused by irregular shipping movements as well as by marketing considerations. The unstable state of the Buller River bar, bad weather, and inadequate storage accommodation at Westport caused frequent stoppages. The men were idle while the colliers were held up, but once conditions improved the mines worked double shifts. The miners strained to produce as much coal as they could to compensate for the time lost. Coal mining could also be held up by inefficient plant. Until 1886, the

(18) BM 4 Apr 1883.
system of haulage was inadequate, and a great deal of the machinery too light for the heavy work required of it. 20 An accident in the mine or on the incline would also stop work and, therefore, affect wages. 21

The mens' wages could be affected then, by many factors. The amount was never the same from week to week. Financial uncertainty on Denniston was consequently commonplace, and the effect of such uncertainty was compounded by the hazards of the job.

(c) Accidents

Coal mining was dangerous and unpleasant. The ever-present possibility of death or injury moulded a man's attitude to his work and his employers. Accidents were accepted by the coal mining community as a part of life, but feared none-the-less.

The accident statistics can only 'scratch the surface'. Unless an Inspector was present when a minor accident occurred, only serious accidents were reported to the mines department. Even so, during the first twelve years, from 1879-1891, coal mining accidents on Denniston constituted one third of the South Island total, for colliery workers. There were six fatalities, three each in the mine and on the incline, and thirty-five injury accidents were reported.

(21) WS 14 Mar 1884.
"A mishap on the Westport Incline, on Thursday caused a temporary stoppage of coal lowering, and consequently the s.s. Omapere when we arrived off the bar this afternoon, was signalled to proceed to Greymouth."
Table III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tonnage</th>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Injured</th>
<th>Dead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>3,892</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>31,880</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>48,348</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>34,997</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>74,187</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>47,470</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>75,609</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>115,942</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>130,170</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>163,015</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>160,240</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>192,606</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even if death were avoided, the type of injuries sustained in coal mining meant considerable suffering for the victim and his family. For instance, in 1886 a fall of coal on a miner, J. Sutherland, crippled him for life. The following year, Fritz Norman, had his foot amputated by a wagon on the incline. Furthermore, Mines Department Statistics normally only recorded the accidents to colliery workers. Their children were constantly exposed to the dangers of living near colliery plant. Houses were built along the tramline. The WCC incline was the only way up to Denniston for four years, and a young boy was one of the first to be run over.

The death rate in the coal mines of the New World

(22) AJHR, Mines Department Statistics.
(23) AJHR, 1886, C-4C, p. 8.
(24) AJHR, 1887, Session I, C. 3, 9.
(25) WT 17 Aug 1883.
was comparable to that known in the Old. The average in
Great Britain in the fifteen years before 1881 was one
death for every 107,574 tons of coal. In the South
Island of New Zealand in 1881, one life was lost for
every 100,000 tons mined.

On Denniston the mine was new, and the work hard.
Coal-mining was characterized by financial uncertainty
and danger. The mining village was isolated, and the
living conditions harsh. Adversity hardened the miners' attitudes towards the Company. Although the pioneering period was past, the WCC had yet to experience the difficulties at opening up such a unique coalfield, and establishing a new industry. The next five years were to witness a consolidation on both fronts.

---

CHAPTER II

THE COMPANY

ECONOMIC MILIEU AND COLLIERY INVESTMENT

The development of colliery plant on the scale of the Westport Colliery Company's works at Denniston demanded a substantial outlay of capital. The capital raised by the Westport Colliery Company in 1879 was found inadequate and the Company was reconstituted as the Westport Coal Company. (WCC). It was intended by the principals of the Westport Colliery Company, that the WCC be based more widely. Eighty thousand shares of five pounds each were to constitute the capital of the company. Of these, thirty thousand were to be taken up as part payment by the shareholders of the Westport Colliery Company. The remaining fifty thousand shares were to be divided equally, and offered in New Zealand and Victoria. The issue was taken up rapidly and the share list was closed eleven days earlier than anticipated, in January 1882. ¹

Who were the investors? By 1890 ² local shareholders were barely represented. Two hundred of the shares held in Westport were owned by T.J. Waters, the managing engineer of the WCC. The other seven were held by a Westport merchant, J. Powell, who had been one of the original Westport Colliery Company shareholders. The shares were taken up mainly by

---

¹ WT 20 Jan 1882.
² Eighth Annual Report of Directors presented to the meeting of shareholders on 25 Feb. 1890 included the first existing sharelist.
New Zealanders, and only twenty-eight per cent of the 69,286 shares were held in Australia. Limited numbers were held in England, Scotland, New York, and Fiji.

Almost half of the shares were in large holdings of five hundred shares or more. Five hundred shares cost the buyer a substantial sum in 1882; £1,250. on the first call of £2. 10s. per share. The typical shareholder was clearly a man of capital. Most of these large shareholders were based in Dunedin. For example, Thomas Brydone, the Superintendent of the Australian and New Zealand Land Company, held 750 shares. They were taken up as his Company was endeavouring to establish a frozen meat industry. William Teschemaker was another large landowner who had invested heavily in the WCC. By way of contrast, George Ulrich, who held 500 shares, was a professional man, the first head of the Otago School of Mines. However, most of the substantial investors were prominent in the commercial circles of Dunedin and were at some time represented on the directorate of the WCC.

During the formative years of the company, the directorate was a fluid assembly of the Dunedin elite.

(3) There were 35 large shareholders: 25 in New Zealand (18 of these in Dunedin); 7 in Australia; and three in Great Britain.
(4) W.H. Teschemaker held 1,922 shares which were worth about £4,805. in 1882.
(5) Olssen, p.41.

...Judging from the membership of the Dunedin Club in 1890 only some 150 men in Otago were considered to belong to the elite. Most were pastoralists, investors (or speculators), merchants or professionals...
All of them had commercial interests other than the WCC. The common denominators were land, the Mosgiel Woollen Company, four Dunedin land and finance houses, and political involvement.

The principal promoter of the WCC, A.J. Burns, resigned from parliament in 1880 to organize the company. Burns had come to New Zealand in 1848. He took up land at Grants Braes and virtually founded Mosgiel. The Mosgiel Woollen Company was the result of his keen interest in factory industry. He then turned his attention to the problem of securing a constant supply of high quality fuel. He found support among the business community of Dunedin. Robert Gillies was a partner in the land and estate business, Gillies and Street. Edward Cargill and George Joachim had recently retired from active involvement in Cargill, Gibbs and Company, (merchants, shipping agents, and shipowners) to form the British and New Zealand Mortgage and Agency Company, a speculative land company. William Larnach was known as an investor. The other directors were pastoralists such as Sir Henry Millar, or merchants and manufacturers like Bendix Hallenstein. They were men of drive and ability, prepared to undertake the direction of one of the most

---

(6) 1. Perpetual Trustees, Estate and Agency Company formed by R. Gillies.
3. The Colonial Bank, directorships were held by E.B. Cargill, W.D. Stewart, and W.D.M. Larnach.
4. The British and New Zealand Mortgage and Agency Company formed by E.B. Cargill, G. Joachim and others.


(8) Olssen, op. cit. p. 32.
innovative coal companies ever contemplated in New Zealand.

The directorate was motivated by the need to secure a steady supply of cheap, high quality fuel. These men were in a unique position to gauge the growing demand. Their collective political experience enabled them to take a nation-wide view of the expanding markets for coal. 9 For instance, William Larnach had been the Minister for Public Works in 1877. 10 Arthur Burns and Bendix Hallenstein were closely connected with the growth of factory industry. 11 Richard Oliver built the Port Chalmers railway 12 and William Larnach was a director of the Kaitangata Railway and Coal Company. Edward Cargill had close connections with shipping interests. 13 Many of the directors owned extensive station properties in North Otago. The town dwellers among them were heavily involved in land companies, for example, the British and New Zealand Mortgage and Agency Company. They were, therefore, closely connected with the rise of the frozen meat industry. 14

(11) Bendix Hallenstein founded the New Zealand Clothing Factory and was a director of Kempthorne, Prosser and Company.
(14) E.B. Cargill was a director of the New Zealand Refrigerating Company.
The economic climate in New Zealand in 1881 encouraged investment by both large and small shareholders. The WCC was floated at the same time as a "moderate upswing" in the economy. The recovery was unfortunately short-lived and by the end of 1882 it was "fast giving way to a relapse", as wheat and wool prices began to fall. This economic downswing was felt more acutely in the South Island. Credit became more difficult to obtain, the level of business activity dropped, and land sales fell. These were difficult years in which to pioneer a coal industry. The slump intensified until the whole country was adversely affected. The WCC had remained marginally viable until now. It was an immensely valuable property, but the value lay in assets and liquidity was a constant problem.

After 1888 the effects of economic adversity were compounded by Australian competition. The Australian economy did not share the economic downturn of the early 1880's. To the WCC, the most important economic link between Australia and New Zealand was through the wheat trade. During the harvesting season the shipping companies carried on a profitable export trade in New Zealand wheat. Rather than run their ships back to New Zealand empty they offered cheap carriage to the Australian coal companies and back-loaded Newcastle coal.

(15) C. Simkin, The Instability of a Dependent Economy, p. 163.
(16) K. Sinclair and W.F. Mandle, Open Account, p. 100.
(17) Ibid, p. 103.
(18) WT 2 Mar 1886.
In New Zealand the only relief from eleven years of recession occurred in 1889 when export prices revived temporarily. In the early nineties the outlook remained bleak. The Australian boom ended after 1891 and conditions in that country began to approximate those in New Zealand. However, in 1895, New Zealand experienced recovery. Prices for wool and wheat rose and the small farmers reaped the benefits of refrigeration. "It was Australia's turn to exhibit the contrast of poverty."  

(20) Sinclair and Mandle, p. 99.  
(21) Simkin, p. 196.
MARKETING AND MONOPOLY

The prospectus of the WCC was extremely optimistic. The experience of the Westport Colliery Company was encouraging. The development work had proceeded rapidly and Buller coal was in demand. The company estimated that they would market 150,000 tons a year in New Zealand alone, and could export at least 100,000 tons to Australia and Tasmania without having to actively compete with New South Wales coal. 1

Initially the WCC had no difficulty selling their coal. The quality was good and customers would take all the Coalbrookdale coal the company could supply. However, not a great deal of Coalbrookdale coal was sold on the open market. The coal produced from the Banbury Mine could only supply ten per cent of New Zealand's total tonnage requirements, 2 and the Union Steamship Company took almost half of this. 3 Consequently, few consumers could rely solely on Coalbrookdale coal.

Marketing difficulties were encountered once coal production reached a high level. 74,187 tons were produced in 1884. 4 Although the coal was in regular supply, users

---

(1) Prospectus of the WCC, New Zealand Ltd., 24 Oct. 1881.
(2) In 1882 the Banbury Mine produced 48,348 tons. The New Zealand total production was 378,272 tons and 129,582 tons were imported. Only 34,997 tons were produced in 1883 as the company revised the surface haulage system.
(3) AJHR, 1882, I. 6, p. 12.
(4) The Union Steamship Company took 1,600 tons per month.
(4) AJHR, 1885, C. 4, p. 13.
were still reluctant to rely entirely on this single source because delivery delays were frequent. Their worst fears were confirmed when a strike took place at Denniston in November 1884. Coalbrookdale coal, in any quantity, disappeared from the market for five months. Under these circumstances Newcastle coal provided much stronger competition than the WCC had anticipated. Fierce competition caused prices to drop alarmingly during 1885.

The future for the company seemed bleak. A loss of nearly £3,500 was disclosed at the fourth Annual General Meeting of shareholders. This left the WCC with liabilities of £51,662 and the directors were urged to raise a loan. The WCC colliers, the Kawatiri, Orowaiti, and Wareatea were offered as security, and a large mortgage was negotiated.

Worse was to come. On 1 August, 1885, the Union Steamship Company assumed control of the Black Diamond Shipping Line, and the transfer of the Koranui Mine was part of the agreement. The WCC was too far extended financially to compete for the sale. This was a calculated move by the Union Steamship Company. They took over a substantial passenger and cargo trade, could now ensure their own coal supplies, and had control of the branch railway line between the WCC and the main line.

(6) WT 2 Mar 1886.
(7) TBid.
(8) Farquhar, p. 6 and 7.
(9) GRA 26 June 1885.
The Union Company increased the tonnage mined at the Koranui five-fold, although it was a difficult and expensive mine to work. The surface haulage system extended three miles and it took almost half of the work force to ensure that it remained in working order. Such a large production from the Koranui Mine caused all sorts of problems for the WCC. The demand for their coal was reduced as the Union Steamship Company no longer required it. There had not been enough railway wagons on the main line from Waimangaroa to Westport to transport the WCC tonnage without stoppages occurring. Now, the same number of wagons was expected to transport an extra thirty or forty thousand tons of Koranui coal as well. T.J. Waters complained to the Westland Coalfield's Committee in 1889 that "there was considerable fighting about trucks" and that work was constantly being held up.

It has been suggested that the Union Steamship Company, in accordance with a world-wide trend among shipowners, became increasingly concerned to preserve a regular supply of coal for fuelling its ships. If they bought on the open market, which was their policy prior to purchasing the Koranui mine, they could be held to ransom, either by colliery owners or miners. The Union Company may have looked at colliery ownership in a new light after their coal supply from the WCC was interrupted for five months by

(10) AJHR, 1886, C-4C, p. 16. 
In 1884 the Koranui mine produced 5,989 tons, in 1885 30,559 tons, and in 1886 44,170 tons.

(11) AJHR, 1889, I. 6 p. 17. 
T.J. Waters to the Westland Coalfields Committee; "they were frequently stopped a couple of hours, and very often for one or two days in the week."

(12) R. Parsons, unpublished correspondence.
a coal miners strike. However, subsequent events indicate that shrewd business procedure was probably more important. The next move was calculated to drive the WCC into closer co-operation with the Union Company. The Union Company was aware that expensive alterations to the haulage system were required to keep the Koranui mine in operation. Towards the end of 1886 they informed the WCC that in future a toll of 1½ pence per ton would be charged for right of transit over the two mile section of branch line owned by the Union Company. The WCC had an average daily output of seven hundred tons. The toll charges would come to £1,312. 10s. a year. When the Union Company offered to negotiate the WCC was in no position to haggle. It was already heavily mortgaged and had no immediate hope of extending their markets in the face of competition from both Newcastle and the Koranui.

The agreement took effect in February 1887. The WCC took over the Koranui mine and immediately closed the pit. The valuable part of the property was the branch line. The Union Company had bought the three WCC colliers, and the cash balance went to pay off the WCC mortgage. A carrying arrangement had been concluded. The Union Company now supplied the shipping for Coalbrookdale coal.

(13) WCC Minute Book - Local Board, 23 Dec. 1886.
(14) AJHR, 1887, Session 1, C. 3, p. 4.
(15) WCC Minute Book - Local Board, 23 Dec. 1886.
(16) AJHR, 1889, I. 6, p. 7. Mr. James Mills in evidence to the Westland Coalfields Committee.
From this point the two companies worked very closely. The freight arrangement worked to their mutual satisfaction and the WCC paid their first dividend in 1887, a somewhat meagre $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The following year they moved closer together to effect a further consolidation of mining and shipping interests, this time in the Grey Valley. The WCC had made a loss on the year's working in the Grey Valley where they had to compete with other coal mining proprietors. The Company successfully put a proposal "to amalgamate their interests and so lessen competition and at the same time lessen expenses." The Union Steamship Company supplied capital for development expenses and negotiated a similar carrying arrangement with the new company. Any shipping owned by the coal mine proprietors was transferred directly to the Union Line. The Grey Valley Coal Company was registered as a joint stock company on 8 August, 1888.

These moves towards amalgamation were labelled monopolistic and provoked a considerable amount of local opposition. R. Reeves, the M.P. for Inangahua, articulated this viewpoint to the Westland Coalfields Committee in 1889. The community, he said, suspected that the combination between the Union Company and the collieries aimed at limiting the output of coal. The report by the Committee pointed out that although the development of the coal

---

(18) Ibid.
(19) Farquhar, p. 52.
The steamers Maori, Brunner, and St. Kilda were taken over from M. Kennedy, and the Oreti from J. Kilgour.
(20) AJHR, 1889, I. 6, p. 12.
R. Reeves, in evidence.
industry on the West Coast was a matter of national importance, three companies controlled the entire operation.\(^{21}\)

The Union Steamship Company and the WCC continued to co-operate in 1889. Local competition had been checked; but Australian competition had intensified. Until 1888, the amount of Newcastle coal back-loaded to New Zealand had been steadily dropping. As trade between the two countries improved in 1889, so did the tonnage of imported coal increase. The problem was compounded by a price war between the Union Company and the Ellis Line, a newcomer to the trans-Tasman trade. Freight rates for grain were reduced by half and coal by up to twenty-five per cent.\(^{22}\) The competition from Newcastle coal was most severe in Dunedin. To meet the challenge, the price of Coalbrookdale coal in Dunedin was reduced to twelve shillings per ton and the Union Company shared the loss by lowering the freight to a non-paying rate.\(^{23}\)

In May 1889 the directors of the WCC attempted to improve their marketing arrangements. They offered their entire output to the Union Company and the agreement was concluded in July.\(^{24}\) The Union Steamship Company contracted to take 165,000 tons at 12s. 6d. per ton loaded at Westport, in the following twelve months. The WCC was no longer involved in marketing their coal. Once it was loaded aboard by the Union Company colliers, it was the Union Steamship

\(^{(21)}\) AJHR, 1889, I. 6, p. iii.

These were the WCC, Union Company, and the Grey Valley Coal Company.


\(^{(23)}\) AJHR, 1889, I. 6, p. 9.

\(^{(24)}\) WCC Abstract of Deeds and Agreements, p. 25.
Company's property.

At the eighth Annual General Meeting of shareholders the Directors announced a dividend of six per cent. The tone of the Chairman's report was hopeful. The competition from Newcastle coal was expected to abate. More importantly, the bar at Westport had been greatly improved and the Company was finally poised to significantly increase their production.

THE MANAGEMENT

The profitability of the WCC depended as much on efficient mine management as on marketing considerations. During the formative years the Company was lucky to employ men of exceptional ability. These men were expected to do more than just manage a mine. They were responsible for the transformation of a visionary plan into a commercial reality.

British qualifications were originally the only measure of mining competency in New Zealand. Robert Denniston, the first mine manager for the WCC had been an underviewer in Staffordshire for eight years. He also had experience of mining in Lanarkshire. His experience was invaluable in New Zealand and he was engaged as a mining engineer by the Public Works Department. In a colonial setting, a man of Denniston's qualifications had great opportunities and after only two years with the Company he went into business for himself in Dunedin, as a mining engineer.

The division of management authority was straightforward while Denniston was in control. The general manager, W. Hay. Dickson, provided the link between the Company Directorate in Dunedin and the coal mining operation at Denniston. R.B. Denniston supervised both the development

(1) AJHR, 1876, A. 3, p. 119.
(2) WT 23 May 1882.
of the coal mine and of the surface haulage system. Within the mine, authority extended down from the underviewers, through deputies to coal hewers and other underground workers, in line with British mining tradition. Once the Coalbrookdale seam was reached, a more complex arrangement had to be adopted as the company now had two mines in operation, the Banbury and the Coalbrookdale. When Denniston left R. Elliot replaced him as mine manager, and an underground manager took charge of the day to day working of each mine.

After 1886 Certificates of Competency were awarded to mine managers in New Zealand. Thomas Brown and John Cameron, underground managers at Coalbrookdale, received two of the first certificates issued. Thomas Brown had been promoted to the position of mine manager when Elliot was transferred to Greymouth in 1885. More than any other individual, Brown was responsible for the numerous practical improvements to the company's property over the next thirteen years. He had been initially employed by the company as a miner but graduated from underground positions of responsibility to become manager. His concern for the practical side of mining is evident in his realistic assessment of the state of the WCC plant when he became manager. In his opinion it was;

... a most hopeless task to keep the concern afloat for even one year, everything was run down to the lowest possible limit, costly breakages were of frequent occurrence, the machinery was hopelessly out of repair, and far

(3) AJHR, 1887, Session 1, C. 11.
Under Section 19 of the "Coal Mines Act, 1886".
(4) A. Openshaw, private papers.
too light for the heavy work required; the mine development was in the most backward condition, stores we had none, and on the whole it was just about as gloomy an outlook as anyone could ever be called upon to face.  

When Brown was appointed, the company recognized mine engineering and mine management as separate functions. Thos. J. Waters was appointed mine engineer to plan development operations. As the mine extended further and development work was projected for Granity Creek, the division of management authority became quite complex. After 1889 there were five levels of management: general manager, consulting engineer, district manager, and a separate mine manager for each defined section of the mines.  

In a small mining community, the position of mine manager carried with it considerable social status. He might be called upon to speak at any social function on Denniston. A substantial residence was provided and the company paid a good salary. Thomas Brown received £325. per year or £6. 5s. a week, roughly double a miners' possible earnings. Salaries were graduated according to responsibility and the general manager received an annual income of £600.  

The problems posed for the management by the nature of the coal mining operation at Denniston just simply could not be solved by reference to British mining practice. The surface haulage system was very modern and the incline unique. Denniston patented an Automatic Indicator and

---

(6) George Joachim, a former director, was now the general manager. Waters was soon to resign and be replaced by R.A. Young, designer of the incline, as consulting engineer. Thomas Brown was the district manager.  
(7) WCC Minute Book, 6 Mar. 1886.
Alarm to allow the incline to be worked safely at night, or in foggy weather. 8 Most of the devices invented by the management were appliances designed to eliminate some specific difficulty. For instance, a serious problem was presented when the company decided to replace the 'endless chain' with an 'endless rope' to improve the efficiency of the haulage system. The ropes were ordered when it was realised that no clip existed which could join the rope to the tubs, or coal trucks. Clips were ordered from all over New Zealand, all ingenious but useless. Thousands of clips were manufactured only to be discarded. The management tried everywhere. In the event, the problem was solved locally. Thos. Waters was in the smiths' shop watching a new design of clip being made when a miner suggested that the chain clip used on the Koramui Incline might work. If chains with large links instead of hooks on each end were used, one link could be threaded through the other and hooked on to the coal truck. The problem was solved. 9

Although the WCC experienced marketing and other difficulties, they were fortunate that the actual mining operation was run by this very competent management team. The visionary blueprint was exciting in its possibilities, but the management frequently found it inadequate on practical detail. It took local ingenuity, solid practical

---

(8) WT 5 Jan 1883.
(9) Dan Moloney Collection, Vol. 1, p. 143.
knowledge, and a lot of hard work on the part of the management to make the venture a success.
CHAPTER III

PEOPLE AND PLACE

DENNISTON - A MINING COMMUNITY?

If it took considerable ability and ingenuity to construct a colliery on a plateau 1,800 feet above sea level, it took courage to live there. The aspect was rocky and treeless. The climate was severe. A rainfall of 120 inches a year was common, thick mists were known to last for days, and it often snowed in winter. There was no shelter, and the gales blew through the settlement unchecked. The cottages provided for the miners were small and draughty. \(^1\) Four rooms meant luxury. There were no roads, only a tortuous track which led from the Brake Head to The Camp. One of the first women to arrive at Denniston summed it all up in a sentence; "Well, of all the places God had made, this beats all!" \(^2\)

For many years Denniston was New Zealand's most isolated coal mining community. To begin with, the only access was up the incline, by foot or in one of the wagons. Joe Hollows came with a group of miners and their families early in 1882. At the foot of the incline the people were

\(^{1}\) WCC Minute Book, 26 Oct 1883. The Special Committee advised the Directors to "have the stables now not required at the mine converted into cottages for the miners!"

\(^{2}\) Dan Moloney Collection, Vol. 1, p. 141.
loaded into railway wagons.

...there were two women in our truck and when we started they were seated near the front end. We had gone possibly 200 yards, namely, just over Conn's Creek bridge and were going up over the trestle work when the ladies began to slide back towards the back of the truck. Their screams could be heard a mile away....

A foot track was not constructed for another three years so any contact with the outside world depended on the incline. There was no telegraph. The inspector of mines, George Binns, was appalled at the extreme isolation of the township. He drew the attention of the Mines Department to the case of an injured child who could receive no medical attention in the sixteen hours before she died. 4

Denniston, nonetheless, grew rapidly. In 1881 the township was recorded as the Westport Colliery Coal Mine, an adequate reflection of the nature of the settlement. The population was sparse and heavily masculine. 5 By 1886, 485 people lived in the hilltop township. 6 It was not a compact settlement. Miners cottages straggled along the tramline at The Camp, around the ridge to the more recently developed centre of the settlement. There, the houses were clustered alongside the newly constructed Denniston track.

No pit village could be better described as a "beseiged community" 7 than Denniston. Severe social and physical isolation was typical of a mining settlement, 8

(3) Dan Moloney Collection, Vol. 1, p. 141.
(4) AJHR, 1883, H. 11, p. 9.
(5) Census Tables, 1881: 78 male, 13 female; total population, 91.
(6) Census Tables, 1886.
(7) Gollan, p.2.
K. Knowles, Strikes- A Study in Industrial Conflict p.165.
but few coal mining communities depended on the one lifeline for their very existence as Denniston did. Everything required to build the new community came up the incline. Even the dead rode down in a wagon. The incline was owned and controlled by the WCC. The company could cause extreme distress in the township by shutting down the incline. They did so during the strike of 1884-5. Even the carpenter working on the new school was forced to stop when he used the last of his timber.

The miners on Denniston not only worked together but necessarily lived together. Their families shared a common fate. Company housing was a great leveller of status differences and the years of hardship they shared on Denniston created a bond of loyalty seldom found in other communities. The settlement became inward-looking and socially self-sufficient - a typical coal mining community, set apart only by its unique situation.

---

(9) No cemetery existed on Denniston as deep soil could not be found.
(10) WES 19 Mar 1885.
THE PEOPLE

It has been suggested that the Westland coal mining population was derived from direct, small-scale migration from the British Isles. The evidence to support this theory has generally been drawn from the Grey Valley. Do the people who come to found the new coal mining community of Denniston have similar origins?

The first coal miners bound for Denniston came to New Zealand as special immigrants on the request of the Westport Colliery Company. Fifty families from the Forest of Dean, Lancashire, Durham and Yorkshire were selected and granted free passages. They arrived in New Zealand in November, 1879, and the Company refused to engage them until the works were complete. Significantly, however, A.J. Burns warned that there would be no work until the "local preachers" moved on. Militants were not wanted on the plateau. In the meantime, the entire party, 157 men, women and children, were housed in the Government depot at Nelson. In January, work was found for them in the coal mines at Malvern, and near Brunner, at Coal Pit Heath. Many of these immigrants later found their own way to Denniston.

John Lomas, for example

(1) McCaskill, 11/24
(2) Westport Colliery Company Minute Book, 24 Jan, 1879.
(3) AJHR, 1880, D. 4, pp. 13-14.
    Correspondence relative to the Introduction of Coal-
    miners for the Westport Colliery Company Limited.
(4) AJHR, 1891, Session II, C.3, p. 170.
    "I am a coal miner at Denniston, and I have been so
    for eight years."
who arrived at Denniston with his family three years after he wrote 'home' from the Nelson Immigration Depot to advise his fellow workers in South Yorkshire not to be similarly misled. 5

Contemporary newspaper reports also furnish information on the origins of the coalminers who came to Dennison. In April 1883, the Buller Miner thought that "most of the men appeared to hail from Scotland or the Borders." 6 In October, the Westport Times reported the arrival of fifty-nine coalminers, seven women and thirteen children from Newcastle. 7 The WCC had been advertising for coalminers in the Auckland and Newcastle newspapers, as the recent winter on Denniston had caused an exodus. 8

The Denniston Register of Deaths provides further evidence. 9 All but two of the coalminers who died in the twenty years from 1880 to 1900, were born in the British Isles. Of the two not from Britain, one was a twenty-six year old Australian, and the other a New Zealander, aged nineteen. In the decade after 1900 the proportion of

(6) BM 14 Apr 1883.
(7) WT 26 Oct 1883.
(8) WT 27 July 1883.
(9) A wide range of information is given in each entry; name, age, occupation, cause of death, father's occupation, religion, birthplace, the length of time spent in New Zealand, and if applicable, the place of marriage. The entries were recorded over the thirty year period from 1880 to 1910.
Australian and New Zealand born increases. The coalfields of Great Britain are all evenly represented, with one significant omission; there were no Welsh miners represented.

(10) Birthplaces of Coalminers who died at Denniston, 1880 - 1910.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>England</th>
<th>Northumberland and Durham</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>South Lancashire</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yorkshire</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Staffordshire</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Forest of Dean</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cornwall</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ayrshire</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lanarkshire</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Counties Down</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tyrone</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Donegal</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kildare</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Clare</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Otago</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Southland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Glentunnel</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Register of Deaths for Denniston, Westport Court House.
The birthplaces of the married women follow a similar pattern. Of the twenty-four entries; nine were born in Scotland, five in England, four in Ireland, and three each in Australia and New Zealand. Similarly, the coal mining centres are overwhelmingly represented. 11

An influx of New South Wales miners in 1883 constitutes a significant variation from the general picture. A migratory pattern is indicated by the place of marriage and the birthplaces of the older children. The coal mining community represented in the Register of Deaths had a history of mobility. Some had moved about the coal regions of Great Britain. A married woman who was born in Fifeshire, for example, had married in Northumberland. Another woman born in Aberdeen had married in Durham. Their migration had not always been direct. Many had travelled to New South Wales first; as is shown by the miner who was born in Staffordshire but married in Lamblin, New South Wales. There are many other similar entries. The low percentage of Australian-born miners would tend to strengthen the theory that the miners from Newcastle were, in fact, recent migrants to New South Wales from Great Britain. Within New Zealand, they had a history of movement between coalfields. The older children had been born in New Zealand, but very often not on Denniston. Among these birthplaces were Kaitangata, Brunnerton, Springfield and Glentunnel. Their parents had also been attracted to Denniston from Auckland, Kumara, Hokitika, Nelson and Stafford.

The Coalfields of Great Britain
Inevitably one has to infer the origins of the majority from the actions of the minority, but a general pattern of migration is clear. On Denniston, the average coal hewer had known coal mining in Britain, often in more than one coal region. He emigrated while single or with a young family. 12 His first destination may have been either New South Wales or New Zealand and he rarely came directly to Denniston.

One further aspect, the size of the migration, needs to be mentioned before some reasons for the migration are suggested. It was indeed predominantly small-scale. The only significant large-scale movement direct to Denniston took place from Newcastle late in 1883. There are contemporary newspaper accounts of the arrival of twenty or thirty coalminers from Dunedin bound for Denniston in 1881 and 1882. 13 It is likely that they had made their way individually to Dunedin and were marshalled there when they responded to one of the WCC's advertisements.

What motivated these people to travel half way round the world to work under conditions substantially similar to those they left behind? Contrary to many immigrants, coalminers regarded themselves as fitted for only one vocation. For instance, Joe Hollows concept of self was simply that of a "plain, working miner". 14 In any assessment of those factors which might have motivated such a migration there are two sides of the question to consider:

(12) The average age of British-born emigrants was thirty.
(13) WT 27 Dec 1881
      WT 31 Jan 1882.
(14) Dan Moloney Collection, p. 141.
      Joe Hollows, "The Reminiscences of an Old Dennistonian",
      clipped from WTS 22 Nov 1930.
the circumstances which tended to push the emigrants to go 'abroad'; and those factors which attracted him to Denniston.

Coal miners in the British Isles experienced difficult times in 1879 and 1880. The most severe economic recession that Great Britain experienced in the nineteenth century became most acute in 1879. The unions which had appeared firmly established before the crisis, faded away. In Yorkshire, only 2,800 remained organized out of sixty thousand men employed. 15 The miners' wages plummeted. In Northumberland, miners who had earned over nine shillings a day in 1873, were reduced to 4s. 4d. 16 The future no doubt appeared bleak, and the disintegration of the union movement must have been disheartening to those involved in its organization.

Similar conditions were experienced in New South Wales but for a different reason. Hard times were caused by the termination of the coal owners' district agreement which had previously fixed a set price for coal. 1880 and 1881 were lean years for the coalminers and their economic recovery was postponed in 1882 by a five-month strike. 17 Any man who had the will and the means to move on had no cause to stay in Newcastle.

In New Zealand recent immigrants were beginning to 'feel the pinch'. Internal migration became commonplace. There were too many labourers and not enough work to go.

(17) Gollan, pp. 61-8.
around. Thos. Stephenson wrote 'home' to Durham that "there are hundred of men travelling the country; and where there is one day's work to be got, there are ten men for it." 18 The experience of the Ward family illustrates the growing difficulties. 19 James Ward emigrated from Devon, travelling first to the United States. After he was injured in an explosion in San Francisco he crossed the Pacific to New Zealand where he worked gold claims on the Coromandel Peninsula. When the gold rush petered out he was employed about the district on public works. When he married there was plenty of work available. Over the years the competition for work increased. Wages fell to five shillings a day and Ward and his two elder sons were forced to travel well away from Thames to find work. "It was at this time that news of steady work reached us." The family was so dissatisfied with conditions in the North Island that they decided to move South, to Denniston "where 10s. per day was the ruling wage for miners." I am sure that many other families shared this experience.

(18) AJHR, 1880, D. 4, p. 13.
(19) James Ward, unpublished manuscript. "The Recollections of a lifetime on the West Coast of the South Island". The recollections were written by James Ward who was requested to do so by his family. They concern the family and life on Denniston, and his business fortunes in the butchery trade. His business is recorded in: The Cyclopaedia of New Zealand, Vol. 5 (1906), p. 194.

...Mr. Ward was born at Thames in the year 1872, was educated at Denniston, and was employed in the butchery business of the Denniston Co-operative Society for four years. He was afterwards employed by Mr. Austin for about three years, and in January, 1904, started business on his own account....
What encouraged these coal miners or labourers, generally disillusioned with the coal industry in their home town or newly adopted country, to want to come to Denniston? In the absence of local miners the WCC had advertised widely for coal miners. As part of the recruitment campaign, coal miners were assured of the availability of good steady work at attractive rates. The special immigrants selected for the Westport Colliery Company were assured of employment at ten shillings a day over a nine-hour, five day week. The advertisements placed in the Auckland and Newcastle newspapers portrayed Denniston as a very desirable place to live:

...Wanted immediately, for New Zealand; 100 coalminers. Splendid climate, current rates; piece work; six months engagement. Free fishing and shooting. Passages arranged by contract, lowest rates. Married men preferred...

Such advertising was alluring enough to encourage a family to leave their home. They were probably aware that if the current wage rates continued their savings would be so depleted that any choice would soon be removed. If they came from abroad they probably share with other migrants, the general desire for a better life in New Zealand.

(20) AJHR, 1880, D. 4, p. 12. "The local miners are now very hard to be got, and many of them are very indifferent workmen." (A.J. Burns, General Manager of the Westport Colliery Company).
(21) WT 26 Oct 1883.
(22) AJHR, 1880, D. 4, p. 12.
(23) Newcastle Morning Herald 28 Dec 1883.
THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

The story of how successive waves of British born immigrants transformed a bare, rocky plateau into a busy colliery village is the story of Denniston. Until 1880 there was no township as such. The construction workers who were temporarily housed at 'The Camp' during the week, spent their weekends in Waimangaroa or Westport. Once the development of the colliery was almost complete, the company undertook an extensive building programme to provide basic housing for the mining population. Labour was diverted from the mine and its attendant works. Some of these men were put to work at the 'Spinner' producing timber which was roped and hauled up a plank chute. The rest were employed at The Camp on the construction of rough two-roomed cottages. Accommodation was inadequate when the first group of coalminers arrived in December 1881 and the company authorized the construction of six more two-roomed cottages and a four-roomed cottage.

Denniston presented a dismal face to its prospective inhabitants in 1882. As their wagon was hauled up over the brown of the hill and landed at the Brake Head the settlers were shocked by the desolation of the landscape. The dozen or so cottages that now existed were divided between the Brake Head and The Camp. The one store was situated half-way between

(1) WCC Minute Book, 12 Mar. 1881.
(2) W. Munro, "The Story of Denniston", p. 6.
(3) WT 27 Dec 1881.
(4) WT 10 Mar 1882.
the two, and no apparent road connected them. The only substantial buildings were the WCC office and workshops.

For a family especially, the living conditions were squalid. The cottages were utilitarian in design. Small wooden structures, with a roof and chimney of corrugated iron. There were no sanitary facilities. There was no running water. Oil drums doubled as ovens and kerosene tins served for most other household purposes. Fortunately, it was still summer.

In spite of the inhospitable environment, or perhaps because of it, the new inhabitants immediately set about the task of creating a community. A lecture on literature was organized in February to raise funds for the construction of a Reading Room. The local member of parliament, John Munro, a Scot, spoke on "Sir Walter Scott" to a "large audience". The young men rapidly organized a social life of their own, separate from the rest of the community. In a day, they built their own social hall out of a large cedar tree. "It was for the exclusive use of young men; grown-ups and females were tabooed". By the light of their pit lamps and a few candles, they played cards or told stories. Then some of the miners decided to form a Drum and Fife Band. The idea was inspired by a miner from Kaitangata who was an accomplished "flautist". Several of the older men could also play the flute. A meeting

(6) WT 24 Feb 1882.
(8) Ibid, p. 142.
was held to solicit financial support, and the WCC gave a donation to help with the cost of the instruments. Before very long the Drum and Fife Band was performing in public, and they were especially popular in Westport, for their novelty, if not their harmony.

Basically the same group of men were responsible for the organization of the Banbury Brass Band in August. The Brass Band was an institution many miners were familiar with as nearly all of the seventeen members were experienced musicians. The conductor also, was drawn from their ranks. The two bands became the focus for all sorts of social activities. They organized regular fund-raising concerts and dances, and provided music for the Christmas and New Year functions.

The lack of adequate buildings was a problem. The small temporary schoolroom at The Camp was the only building available on Denniston and the larger functions had to be held in Waimangaroa. The school itself was also a cause of community complaint. Mary Elliott, the daughter of the mine manager, had taught previously at Greymouth. She opened a school voluntarily, in a rented building, which was soon badly overcrowded. Many children did not attend school at all and many of the older boys went with their fathers to work. A School Committee was formed to persuade the

(9) WT 22 Aug 1882.
(10) WT 12 Sept 1882.
5 Jan 1883.
6 Mar 1883.
(11) WT 12 Jan 1883.
(12) AJHR, 1883, H. 11, p. 9.
In April, the Inspector of Mines, George Binns, reported an eleven year-old boy he found working on the surface. "The contention was that there was no proper school, and that therefore the boy came under the exemption provided by law".
Education Board to provide a classroom. Although land for the new school had been cleared the Waste Lands Board was slow to grant a suitable site. They were encouraged when the new School Room was opened in August 1884, and celebrated with a tea, concert and dance. The Nelson Education Board had appointed a teacher to the school and the childrens' education would be properly catered for. As well, the community now had a venue for their various social events.

The community also acted in concert to secure proper medical services. A committee was formed to advertise for a resident doctor. The miners were prepared to guarantee an income of three hundred pounds per year. Due to their isolation the people badly felt the want of a doctor. Men injured in the mine had to be lowered down the incline in a wagon and taken to Westport by train. Women could expect to lie unattended if they experienced complications during childbirth, and children had died in unnecessary pain because it took so long to summon a doctor from Westport.

It seems that children may have been more at risk on Denniston that in most villages in New Zealand at this time. The plateau was not a healthy place to live. Moreover the WCC plant was very exposed and accidents involving children were common. In November 1882 a four-year old

---

(13) BM 4 Apr 1883.
(14) WT 27 July 1883.
(15) WT 13 Apr 1883.
(16) AJHR, 1883, H. 11, p. 9.
boy was seriously injured when he fell of the screens.\textsuperscript{17} Another child was burned to death when she fell in front of a steam pipe coming out of the engine shed.\textsuperscript{18} Many houses were built along the tram line. For some time the only way to Burnett's Face, for instance, was along the tram line and children had to dodge the moving coal tubs on their way to and from school.\textsuperscript{19}

Denniston was unhygienic as well as dangerous. Visitors to the plateau complained of the unsanitary, 'smelly' state of the township.\textsuperscript{20} As there was very little soil, it was impossible to bury refuse and most of it was dumped over the cliffs or in the creeks. When a short spell of dry weather exhausted their water tanks, residents had to walk some distance to find pure water for household purposes. Fortunately, the almost continuous rain generally kept the creeks fresh.\textsuperscript{21} The problem was acknowledged by the Buller County Council when the councillors formed a committee to enquire into the unsanitary state of the township. They decided, however, that the Council could not act until access was sufficiently improved to permit the collection of night soil by horse and dray.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{(17) \textit{AJHR}, 1883, H. 11, p. 9.}  
\textsuperscript{(18) Denniston Register of Deaths.}  
\textsuperscript{(19) \textit{AJHR}, 1892, C-3B, p. 6.}  
\textsuperscript{(20) \textit{WS} 2 May 1884.} \textit{WT} 2 Feb 1885. \textit{WT} 12 Nov 1886.  
\textsuperscript{(21) Ward, p. 22.}  
\textsuperscript{(22) Buller County Council Minute Book, 26 Nov, 1884.}
Although the number of infant deaths from gastro-enteritis approximates the national level, twice as many Denniston infants succumbed to epidemic diseases.\(^2^3\) This may be one indication of the effects of bad hygiene on the community.

The almost perpetual rain and damp fog also caused ill health. When James Ward was a delivery boy he would be wet through before he reached the butchers shop in the morning. Although his mother urged him to change his clothes when he came in for lunch he thought it pointless, as he would soon be wet again. Dry clothing had to wait until the end of the day.\(^2^4\) Respiratory diseases were prevalent on Denniston. Denniston infants died from bronchitis and pneumonia at a rate nearly three times higher than the corresponding national average.\(^2^5\) It is difficult to statistically test whether Denniston really was less healthy than the other mining villages known by the mining families. However, the evidence tends to suggest that life in the New World was scarcely an improvement on the Old.

The cost of living on Denniston was a common complaint and a shock to the new arrivals. In April 1884, the community decided to do something about it. They formed a co-operative store to operate on a cash-only basis. The Miners' Co-operative applied to the WCC for a reduction in


\(^{24}\) Ward, p. 19.

\(^{25}\) Appendix. III, pp. 152-3.
freight charges for foodstuffs on the company steamers. Despite the employer's refusal the store was still profitable and within the year it was extended. 

The problem of access came to the forefront again late in 1884. A twelve-year old boy was run over while he was walking home up the incline. The resentment which the community felt about the lack of any proper access surfaced once again. Their case was frequently and forcefully stated in the correspondence columns of the local newspapers. A public meeting was held to protest.

The miners contended that with a population of seven hundred, Denniston warranted the attention of the Buller County Council. The community at large took the view that the WCC could not be blamed as they paid rates to the County. Early in the new year another accident occurred. Two local businessmen were ascending in an empty truck when the full descending truck broke free and ploughed over their wagon. The local hotel-keeper was seriously injured. The man killed was the County Councillor for Wareatea North, the Denniston Riding. Action resulted, and within the month the Government Inspecting Engineer had surveyed the Denniston Track. Finance took longer to negotiate and tenders were called in June.

(26) WCC Minute Book, 18 July, 1883.
(27) WT 29 July 1884.
(28) WT 17 Aug 1883.
(29) WT 21 Aug 1883.
(30) WT 11 Dec 1883.
(31) WS 12 Feb 1884.
(32) WS 5 Mar 1884.
(33) WS 23 June 1884.
The range of social activities available on Denniston broadened in 1884. Political campaigning began in April. John Munro, the current member for Buller and champion of the Denniston Track, 34 was welcomed to Denniston by a piper, the brass band, and an audience of one hundred and fifty people. 35 A Good Templar's Lodge, known as "Our Mountain Home" was inaugurated in May. 36 It soon had over fifty members. A quadrille assembly now met regularly. 37 In September, the Reading Room was opened and a concert and ball was organized to celebrate. 38 At the very end of the year the Denniston Track was finished.

Denniston was on display to a ministerial party in February 1885. The visitors were fortunate to be able to walk up the new track, which was only three feet wide and "compelled Indian file." 39 In his speech after a tour of the area, Premier Robert Stout said that although the hospitality and industry of the township impressed favourably, the neglected state of their sanitary arrangements did not. He complimented their fine band. "He was glad they took amusement in that way. .... It would give them something to turn to when they grew older, instead of going to stimulants for excitement". He advised them to plant little gardens, and urged them to be good fathers and citizens. After all,

(34) WS 25 Apr 1884.
(35) WS 4 Feb 1884.
(36) WS 2 May 1884.
(37) WT 29 July 1884.
(38) WT 11 Nov 1884.
(39) WES 5 Feb 1885. "The Ministers visit to Denniston".
the miners were the pioneers in this part of the country. W.J.M. Larnach, was not only Minister of Mines, but was, in fact, one of the largest shareholders of the WCC. He reminded them how much better off they were here than in their country of origin. They should be fair and reasonable with the company, and not obstructive. The Buller coalfield extended the "opportunity for them to become rich" but if they "desired to succeed, they should remain constant at work and live with provident habits". The Ministers’ condescending, indeed platitudinous remarks were received politely, if not enthusiastically.

Although Denniston still appeared raw to these visitors, the institutions of the community were now relatively well developed. There was a variety of business houses, several hotels, and even a "cosy haircutting and shaving saloon." 40 A medical practitioner, Dr. Gaze, visited the Hill on alternate days. The state school was now well established and a second teaching position had been advertised. The Banbury Brass Band was well known. At the end of five years the inhabitants were beginning to come to terms with their environment.

(40) WT 11 Nov 1884.
A VICTORIAN COLLIERY VILLAGE; DENNISTON 1885 - 1889

It has been suggested that the nature of a New World community was determined by the time at which it was founded, and by that fragment of old world society which founded it. ¹

Denniston was substantially based on coal mining stock from the coalfields of Great Britain. These people, peculiarly mobile, were either possessed of a healthy yearning for material betterment, or desire to escape difficult social conditions in their country of origin. The latter sentiment may have been responsible for the instability of Denniston, which had to be occasionally re-populated. ² The inhabitants were slow to commit themselves to Denniston by building their own homes, they "did not care about settling in the place". ³

By 1889 this attitude was changing and Denniston was becoming more settled. The founding fragment was also characterized by an almost total working class background. ⁴ A great many were at least second generation miners. ⁵ Although the circumstances of a new life could be expected to weaken inherited prejudices and conventions, for the coalminer the difference between life in the Old World and the New was not so very great. Twelve thousand miles of ocean could not

---

(1) Louis Hartz, The Founding of New Societies, pp. 3-10.
(2) WT 27 July 1883.
(3) AJHR, 1889, I. 6, p. 37.
(4) Denniston Register of Deaths.
Of those coalminers whose fathers occupations were known, 60% had coal mining fathers.
(5) Denniston Register of Deaths.
Of the 79 adults, only 7 had fathers' occupations recorded which could be classified as other than working class; for example; coalmine proprietor, constable, publican, watchmaker.
kill traditions innate in many generations.

The way of life in a colliery village is substantially similar regardless of location, and to a certain extent, of time. British mining traditions were important to the industry in New Zealand and during the twenty years from 1880 to 1900 the coalminers were slow to accept change. Pitwork was universally unpleasant, dirty, and dangerous. Similarly, the entire village was financially dependent on the coal industry. In 1887 eighty per cent of the householders were employed directly in or about the mine. The other householders serviced the community. 6

Business life on Denniston was now much advanced on the lone store that had supplied the first inhabitants. 7 There were three hotels; the Miners' Rest, Ormond's and McGill's large, two storied Denniston Hotel. There was a postal and telegraph office. Four general stores, three butchers, and three bakers provisioned the township. 8 Of necessity, the business people were sympathetic to the mining community. The credit system was universal and any stoppage that affected the men's fortnightly wages put the accounts behind. "Denniston was no place to conduct a business with the expectation of improving one's financial

---

Of the 132 households recorded there were 106 coalminers, 2 mine managers and one clerk; 17 business people and 4 tradesmen; one schoolmaster and one constable.

(7) Dan Moloney Collection, Vol. 1, p. 141.

(8) Wise's, 1887-8, p. 138.
position". 9 A strike spelt disaster for the entire community. As insurance against a stoppage, most families would stock up with large quantities of basic foodstuffs, and then be unable to pay their accounts for the duration of the strike. One of the earliest casualties was the miners own Co-operative Society. This venture was mounted in 1883 in an effort to ease the high cost of living on Denniston. 10 The store did well, but operated on a cash-only basis. A five-month strike that began in November 1884 broke the co-operative altogether. The stock was sold up and the creditors offered 12s. 6d. in the pound. 11 This unfortunate experience did not deter the miners from entering further co-operatives. A new Co-operative Society was started some years later, and then a Co-operative Butchery. 12 There was a rapid turnover of business people, another indication of the insecure financial state of the community. Tradespeople either decided that they could do better elsewhere, or went broke. It took many years for those who remained to put business back on an even keel. 13

To measure their well-being, the new inhabitants of Denniston compared their new condition with the life they had left behind in Great Britain. The women on Denniston found life less bearable. In any mining community women

(9) Ward, p. 4.
(10) WT 27 Apr 1883.
(11) WT 27 Apr 1886.
(12) Wise's, 1890-1, p. 142.
occupied a subordinate position, but on Denniston their social isolation was intensified. The dominant values in any community are in part derived from those in the work structure. The nature and organization of coal mining created deep bonds of male solidarity. A miner's first loyalty was to his 'mates' 14 and generally his wife ran a poor second. Women were excluded from the dominant male solidarity structure 15 and their status was diminished as a result. John Lomas, the Union President, was probably the most respected man on Denniston. He was humanitarian and hard-working. On the question of the respective roles of man and wife, however, he held firm views:

...He had no sympathy with women being made to work against men. The working men should be in such a position that they should be able to keep their wives and daughters in their homes....

Women were classed as "the gentler sex" 17 but the pioneer women on Denniston belied this classification. Some of them had been left behind while their husbands went ahead to Denniston to earn, to shift the rest of the family, or to prepare the new home. Priscilla Ward had to face alone the task of selling the family home at Thames and the sea voyage to Westport with her three youngest

(14) N. Dennis, Coal is Our Life, p. 79.
(16) LT 1 Apr 1890, "Mr. Lomas at the Theatre Royal".
children. 18 They shouldered the tasks of running their new households under the most difficult conditions. And widowhood was never a more present possibility than in a mining community. 19 Often women would have to care for their injured or maimed husbands as well as support their large families for a time. The homogeneity of the community largely eliminated the need for domestic servants. Only the mine manager's wife was in a position to afford domestic help. Service was the most common occupation of working-class women until the rise of factory industry. 20 Women on Denniston worked as milliners, dressmakers, teachers, and storekeepers. Mrs. H. Pollock ran the Miners' Rest, and Mary Sherlock, the Coalbrookdale Hotel at Burnett's Face. 21

For women especially, the sting of emigration lay in their separation from family and friends back 'home'. The women in a colliery village had traditionally developed strong kinship links 22 to compensate for their exclusion from the majority of the institutionalized leisure activities. Now these ties were severed. On Denniston, a man could involve himself in the Banbury Brass Band, the Drum and Fife Band, and the Cricket and Football Club; attend Union and

(18) Ward, p. 2.
(19) Denniston Register of Deaths.
The average size of families of the miners who died between 1880-1910, was five children.
1890-1, p. 142.
1894-5, p. 243.
1900, p. 258.
(22) A. Walker, Coaltown, pp. 17-35.
Lodge meetings or lectures organized by the School of Mines; or call in to one of the three hotels. None of these avenues for social intercourse was open to women. Only if properly escorted, could a women visit the Reading Room or join the Quadrille Society. In pioneer communities, women often established social contact through an involvement in the local-level organization of schools and churches.23 On Denniston, the former avenue was available. When the School Committee had realized their aim and the School Room was built the women turned their attention to the organization of community dances, and programmes of seasonal celebration.24 Until 1890 any religious participation was necessarily limited. Religious services of any denomination were intermittent, and relied on temporary accommodation.25 The first denomination to hold services on Denniston was the Salvation Army. They held large meetings in the old school rooms at The Camp.26 Wesleyan lay preachers visited the township occasionally. The earliest regular services did not begin until 1887, when Waimangaroa secured a resident Anglican minister.27

Within the home also, the women found life more difficult. The cramped conditions and the climate made the most routine household tasks burdensome. The women endeavoured to run clean and comfortable homes with a

(23) Dixson, p. 181.
(24) WT 11 Dec 1883.
(25) Munro, pp. 17-19.
(27) Wise's, 1887-8, p. 401.
resignation that Joe Hollows described as heroic. 28

The home that Ward prepared for his family had four rooms, a porch, and a wash house, "with a privy a little distance away". They were lucky to have a coal range. The kitchen was the only living room, as Mother and Father occupied one bedroom, the four boys another, and their daughter slept in the sitting room. Two more boys came later. Such large families were common. 29 The strain of constant childbearing put a great strain on the mother's health, 30 which compounded the physical exhaustion caused by caring and cooking for a large family.

Did a greater material comfort eventually compensate for the social and physical deprivations encountered when the family set up house on Denniston? The miners' wages varied constantly, but in 1886 the average weekly wage was about two pounds. Most of the cottages on Denniston were company-owned and the weekly rentals ranged from 4s. 6d. for two rooms to ten shillings for eight rooms. 31 A family was left with thirty or thirty-five shillings to manage on. Despite the high cost of living, this amount compared favourably with the wages the miners had known in Great Britain, where wages were as low as £1. 12s. ½d. per week in 1879. 32 The same was true of other areas of New Zealand. The families on Denniston considered themselves

(30) Denniston Register of Deaths.
The average age of death of the married women was 43.
(31) AJHR, 1891, Session II, C. 3, p. 169.
fortunate as the depression over New Zealand deepened.

The coal mining community had an ambivalent attitude towards education. Parents seemed keen to have their children suitably 'schooled' but there was little occupational choice. Jack Ward counselled his younger brother against staying on Denniston once he left school:

...my boy, as soon as you are able to earn any money, save it all and get out of this God-forsaken place as fast as you can. There is nothing here for the advancement of anyone. In other places there is a prospect of a bright future but not here. One cannot become anything but a coal miner here....

James Ward left school when he was ten. He had just passed the fourth standard and resented the fact that his meagre 6d. pocket money did not match that given to his companions. He did not want to work in or about the mine so he got a job as a delivery boy for the Co-operative Butchery. His parents made him promise to go to Night School but before long he stopped attending. 34 For most children their education would have ended with primary school; the boys to work with their fathers, 35 and the girls to help Mother with the household chores and the younger children. The school itself consisted of two rooms, built on a sloping, rocky plateau. There was no grassed playing area, and not even enough level ground for a game of marbles. The pupils were described by the School Inspector as disorderly and backward. 36 Although primary and secondary schooling was often neglected, the Night School

---

(33) Ward, p. 5.
(34) Ibid.
(35) AJHR, 1883, H. 11, p. 9.
(36) MT 22 Jan 1886.
was well attended and the Reading Room was well patronized. When a School of Mines was established the lecturer was moved to say that he had "never met a more intelligent lot of men, or any men more anxious to learn than the Denniston coal miners". These and other more leisured activities had to contend with the disruption caused by shift work. Band practices, Lodge meetings, and social gatherings could rarely be arranged at times suitable to more than half of the miners. One concert evening was interrupted half-way through by a group of miners on their way home from the mine in their blackened pit clothes, hats and lamps. They danced a 'Miners' Quadrille' to the delight of the audience. The effects of a shifting population, whether due to want of work or to strikes, also adversely affected the local social institutions. The Banbury Brass Band was re-organized twice in two years. Some local institutions came to be duplicated as the settled area on Denniston widened. It was characteristic of mining communities for settlement to be as close to the mouth of the mine as possible. A long tramp to work on top of the distance the men had to walk within the mine,

(37) WT 22 May. 1883.
"The want of some systematic means of tuition has long been felt by the young men and boys who are working underground all day, and Mr. McIntyre should receive that encouragement he deserves from the residents on the Hill".

(38) A. Openshaw, private papers.
Mr. Thomas Fenton to Professor Balc, Otago University 30 Apr. 1887.

(39) AJHR, 1888, H.2, p. 17

(40) Dan Moloney Collection, Vol. 1, p. 105.

(41) WT 14 Dec 1883.
Dan Moloney Collection, Vol. 1, p. 146.
was time consuming and tiring. The three miners in the Ward family had two miles to walk to work, to the mine mouth. 42 A subsidiary township developed at Burnett's Face, a further two miles along the tram line. 43 Similar to Denniston in 1881, Burnett's Face had a heavy masculine population and the occupational structure was dominated by the colliery-related occupations.

Denniston had by now largely taken over the role from Waimangaroa, of service centre for the coalfields. This table illustrates changes in the occupational structure of the coalfield, 1880 - 1900.

Table V

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Progressive Colliery Settlement</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1885</th>
<th>1887</th>
<th>1890</th>
<th>1894</th>
<th>1900</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waimangaroa Colliery-related occupations</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service occupations</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denniston Colliery-related occupations</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service occupations</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnett's Face Colliery-related occupations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service occupations</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(43) New Zealand Census Tables, 1891
Denniston had 453 males, 349 females; total population of 802.
Burnett's Face had 223 males, 82 females; total population of 305.
There was very little inter-occupational or inter-village movement. (44)

In 1889 then, the township was well developed. It was linked by telegraph to the outside world. The four hotels, (45) the bakeries, stores, and boardinghouses all conducted a brisk trade. The State School had 190 children on the roll. (46) The School of Mines, the Banbury Brass Band, the Cricket Club, and the many other social institutions were all strongly supported. Denniston had all the appearances of a busy colliery village.

Service occupations: publicans, storekeepers, salesmen, milliners, bootmakers, bakers, butchers, cabinetmakers, newsagents, dressmakers.

(45) Wise's, 1890-1, p. 142.
The Sons of Freedom was also opened.

(46) AJHR, 1889, C. 2, p. 165.
The School of Mines had 200 members.
CHAPTER IV

LABOUR

JOHN LOMAS AND THE DENNISTON MINERS UNION

John Lomas was thirty-six years old when he became the inaugural president of the Denniston Miners' Union. Together with his wife and son, he emigrated from South Yorkshire in 1879 as one of the special immigrants requested by the Westport Colliery Company. Like so many of these early miners, his working career in New Zealand started at Springfield, and not Denniston. It was not until 1883 that he finally settled on the plateau. Prominent among the cultural baggage he brought with him from the Old World were Methodism and unionism. Lomas had been a lay preacher and a unionist for more than twenty years. His work on behalf of the miners earned him the respect of the entire community. Lomas was described as the most able and the most popular man on the Hill by a Denniston correspondent when he became head of the Good Templar's Lodge in 1886. He "was always ready to do any little he could to forward the interests of the inhabitants of Denniston". Joe Hollows recalled that some of the

(1) Department of Labour, Immigration Division, Library: John Lomas was born in 1848 at Disley, in Cheshire. He was sent to work at the age of seven and a year later was working in the coal mines.
(2) AJHR, 1880, D. 4, p. 13.
(3) AJHR, 1891, C. 3, p. 170. Session II.
(4) LT 1 Apr 1890.
(5) JM 11 June 1886.
(6) WT 16 Nov 1886.
"inhabitants" were unfortunately, not quite ready to be improved. Lomas was "frequently urging" the hard cases of the community to join the Order. Two of them were finally "roped in". Lomas was planning to build Lodge rooms;

...to keep the two new members interested they were deputed to chose a site and report at the next meeting. The following day was Sunday, so after breakfast Bill and Jim met at the brake head. It was a beautiful sunny day. They were examining a site near where Ormond's Hotel was afterwards built when they were joined by the local publican and on his asking what they were looking at they told him. He offered to assist and this offer was accepted. Various places were examined before they could come to a decision. The publican then turned to our heroes saying, "It's a warm morning. What about a pint?" Jim looked at Bill and said "What doesta say, Bill?" Bill replied, "Well Jim, only one mind". Pint followed pint and that was the end of the hard cases' experience as Good Templars. 7

Lomas conducted Methodist services on Denniston and in the surrounding districts, wherever there was no minister. 8 He was later elected out of the pit to become check-weighman for the miners. 9 His steadying influence and leadership qualities were the planks upon which union organization on the plateau were built.

Conditions on Denniston were scarcely conducive to amicable industrial relations. The harshness of the environment, and the intermittent employment available

---

(7) Dan Moloney Collection, Vol I p.145.
(8) Department of Labour Library.
(9) CRA 24 Sept 1889.
provoked a steady stream of minor disputes. The miners were especially critical of stoppages caused by inefficient plant. In their view the management turned an unsympathetic face to legitimate demands. 10

Many of the miners were undoubtably familiar with union procedure. 11 Their experience of union organization in Great Britain was at the county level. For instance, the miners' union in South Yorkshire, which had been formed in 1858 claimed seventeen thousand members in 1873. Each member contributed one shilling per week to an accumulative fund from which various benefits were paid in the case of accident, sickness, old age or death. 12 When the county unions became numerically strong they entered into collective bargaining with the mine owners. The employers' maintained that coal prices should govern wages and during the seventies, the unions accepted this principle. Sliding scales were instituted. 13 In 1879 coal prices began to fall. As the miners' wages were pegged to the selling price of coal, wages fell at the same rate. No minimum wage had been negotiated and the unions virtually disintegrated.

Some of the men had experienced new world organization in New South Wales. 14 Miners' unions had grown steadily

---

(11) The average age at which they emigrated was thirty. Boys as young as seven started work in the mines. These men could be expected to have had at least ten years of Old World union experience.
(13) Arnot, p. 52.
(14) WT, 26 Oct 1883.
during the 1870's, in that state. They received a setback in 1880 with the end of the employers' district agreement. However, a new agreement fixed a minimum price for coal late in 1881 and W.G. Spence became secretary of the Amalgamated Miners' Association (AMA) in 1882. He undertook to construct the one powerful union and encouraged the various miners' unions to amalgamate or federate with the AMA. Although any progress inevitably meant a struggle, miners' organization in Australia was being seen to be successful.

In September 1884, John Lomas and a group of the older, like-minded miners, jointly called a mass meeting. Unionism was advocated as one means of regularizing relations with the company. The meeting unanimously adopted the motion to form a union with a formal constitution and an elected executive. John Lomas was elected president, and the Committee presented the mine manager with a copy of their Constitution. The Denniston Coal Miners Mutual Protection Society was born.

(15) Gollan, pp. 59-64.
(16) Ibid p. 70.
The other miners were James Carruthers, George Smith, John Stevenson, and Benjamin Bennett.
(18) GRA 17 July 1889.
(19) The name chosen for the union was an indication of the spirit in which it was formed; combination was sought for defensive purposes.
Six weeks after Lomas launched the union the WCC lowered the tonnage rate.¹ When the men arrived at work on Friday morning, 27 November, notices had been posted at each mine informing them that as from 12 December, payment for screened coal would be 3s. 9d. per ton in the Banbury, and 3s. 6d. per ton in the Coalbrookdale seam. The miners were dumbfounded. No reasons were given. The union officials had frequently interviewed the manager and although he had been generally unhelpful, they had not expected a direct attack on wage rates.²

The proposed change in the tonnage rate was a reduction. The miners had previously been paid 3s. 0d. per ton 'off the shovel' although the company had been marketing screened coal for some time. Lomas complained that the miners were;

...expected to submit our coal travelling in tubs for at least 1 ½ miles, and then to be screened and the nuts and slack taken from it and the miner only to get the weight of the best coal, and as an equivalent we are offered 9d. and 6d. per ton....

The screening device the WCC intended to use was euphemistically known as "The Billy Fairplay". ⁴

---

¹ WCC Minute Book, 26 Nov 1884.
² WT 16 Dec 1884.
³ WT 23 Dec 1884.
⁴ WES 17 Feb 1885.

This newspaper clipped an article on the machine from the Colliery Guardian 12 Dec 1884. The Billy Fairplay had been introduced to Northumberland and Wales, without opposition, during the coal famine to increase the amount of round coal produced. By this method the coal was weighed twice. It was weighed whole, then the slack was run through the screens, weighed and subtracted from the total. "A liberal allowance was made to the men for the round coal". Although this method of screening was time consuming, the Denniston coalminers objected to the equivalent wage rate offered by the WCC, not to machine itself.
Union officials now suspected that the Company was attempting to provoke a strike in an effort to crush the union. Certainly, after announcing the new wage rate the manager steadfastly refused the union any negotiating role. Lomas no doubt realized that to allow the company to ignore the union on this occasion would spell the end of unionism on the Denniston plateau, at least in the foreseeable future. Accordingly, on 11 December, he instructed the miners to 'bring their tools to bank'.

Christmas was a bad time to be on strike. The demand for coal was low and the WCC simply arranged for their steamers to coal at Greymouth. Few miners had substantial savings and the new union had no strike fund. The incline stopped working and provisions had to be packed up the incline. In January, Lomas attempted to negotiate but the directors refused. Several families who could no longer hold out left the plateau. The larger families were beginning to suffer; they no longer had the means to move. The miners were getting desperate. In an attempt to find some support, Lomas led a deputation to Brunnerton, where he held a meeting with local miners in the Good Templar's Hall. As a result the Brunnerton

(5) WT 16 Dec 1884.
(6) Ibid.
(7) WES 6 Jan 1885.
(8) GRA 5 Jan 1885.
(9) GRA 14 Jan 1885.
miners struck a levy of five shillings per man to help the Denniston miners. The Koranui miners were similarly moved to contribute.

At the end of January, the WCC General Manager was authorized by the directors to negotiate. A tonnage rate equivalent to that paid in Greymouth was to be settled by arbitration. Meanwhile the miners were to return to work at the new rate. It was decided that the company and the miners each appoint two arbiters to compare rates and conditions at the Brunner and Denniston mines. Their decision was to be final. In February however, the directors changed their minds: the original terms must be accepted. It was announced that the managers of the Brunner Mine had refused the arbiters entry. Two further procedures for arbitration were put before the directors, but of course, both were rejected. The men once again stopped work. They had intended to accept the new rate only if the Company could show that

(10) Ibid.
(11) WES 19 June 1885.
(12) WCC Minute Book, 28 Jan 1885.
(13) WES 16 Feb 1885.
Elliott and Harrison (Manager of the WCC Wallsend Mine) were to act for the WCC, and Lomas and a Greymouth miner for the men.
(14) WCC Minute Book, 25 Feb 1885.
(15) WES 3 Mar 1885.
(16) WES 7 Mar 1885.
A funny correspondent asks, "What is the difference between the WCC's miners and a box of damp lucifer matches?" He supplied the answer: "One lot will strike and the others won't".
it was equivalent to the rate paid to the miners at
Greymouth. Lomas alleged that the offer of arbitration
had been "a sham from the first". 17

The directors now took a hard line. If the miners
did not accept the Company's terms they would "be required
to clear out of the Company's houses within a fortnight". 18
Lomas quickly looked about for assistance. He wrote to
James Curley, the Newcastle miners' secretary, and to the
AMA. 19 One final conference was held between Patterson,
on behalf of the directors), and the miners. The men
offered to go back to work at 4s. 2d. per ton screened by
the Fairplay machine. Patterson would not budge. He
announced the decision of the directors "to close up the
works for a short time until another staff" could be
employed. 20

In April, the WCC moved to make good its threats.
Thirty-one summonses were issued to the miners in
company houses. 21 The cases were heard in the Westport
Magistrates Court three days later. The miners asked
for a non-suit. "The place was inaccessible, and it would
be hard and cruel to turn the families out". 22 The
magistrate found in favour of the WCC. The solicitor
acting for the WCC explained that the Company had shown

(17) WES 13 Mar 1885.
(18) WCC Minute Book, 9 Mar 1885.
(19) Salmond, Appendix F, p. 31.
(20) WES 25 Mar 1885.
(21) WES 7 Apr 1885.
(22) WES 10 Apr 1885.
Moynihan, the solicitor acting for the miners.
great consideration in agreeing to operate the incline to lower the miners' furniture, "The men really wanted to hold over to annoy the Company, and there were strong reasons why the company wanted the men away out of the houses".23

The WCC immediately began to bring in 'free' labour from Dunedin. Before they did so, however, they requested that a constable be stationed on Denniston.24 The first ten labourers arrived in mid-April but they had gone within the week. They wrote to the Westport Evening Star to publicize their reasons for leaving Denniston smartly:

...it is in justice to ourselves and the men who are on strike at Denniston that we wish to make known...how we have been led astray.... 25

They had been told by the company that the strike had been settled, and guaranteed twelve or fourteen shillings a day. With the Fairplay machine, however, they soon discovered that they could not earn a quarter of that amount. By June, the WCC had sixty 'blacklegs' at work in the mine filling slack 26 but these labourers also became dissatisfied. They could make 'fair' wages at the quoted rate only if they were kept steadily at work. Insufficient rolling-stock and storage facilities often held them up 27 although they were only sending down two-thirds of the coal produced each day by the union miners. 28

From this point the financial position of the miners

---

(23) Ibid.
(24) Munro, p. 25, 17 Apr. 1885.
(25) WES 17 Apr 1885.
(26) WES 1 June 1885.
(27) WES 17 June 1885.
(28) WES 25 June 1885.
began to steadily improve. Twenty-five pounds came from Newcastle each month. 29 In May, Lomas organized the Brunnerton and Koramui miners, 30 and their unions became branches of the Denniston association. They continued to contribute five shillings and 1s. 2d. per man per week respectively. Small donations were sent to the Denniston strike fund from other sympathetic but unorganized coalminers. The Seamen's Union sent help also. 31

The mining families who still stuck it out had suffered greatly. During the seventeen weeks they had been idle, the miners averaged 5s. 2d. per man per week, and an extra 8d. for each dependent child. Their numbers had dwindled from 156 in November, to 35 in mid-June. 32 However, in June, fifty pounds was received from the Melbourne Bootmakers Association, 33 and the first contributions from the AMA arrived. George Williams, the President of the AMA, wrote to the Denniston coal-miners union that now "we will be able to find you the sinews of war". As the Denniston association was not an affiliated member of the AMA the president could not act on their behalf until he obtained the approval of the Executive Council. The Shipwrights' Union had struck a levy of one shilling per member and other unions were following their lead. Williams hoped that together they

---

(29) WES 19 June 1885.
(30) WES 21 May 1885.
(31) WES 18 June 1885.
Kaitangata was one of these.
(32) WES 25 June 1885.
Some union miners managed to get work at the Koramui where they could help to support their less fortunate fellows.
(33) WES 18 June 1885.
could carry "the fight to a successful termination". The Denniston Committee immediately increased the amount paid to each man to one pound per week, with two shillings extra for each child, and re-opened negotiations with the WCC.

The WCC was now more disposed to seek a settlement. The company was no doubt aware of the strengthened support for the unionists as Lomas had forwarded the details to the Westport Evening Star. The coal market was quickening as winter approached, and there were signs that the bar on the Buller River was beginning to silt up. The shipping, accommodation, and payment of free labourers had cost the WCC over five thousand pounds, and the company was working at a loss. The WCC accepted the miners offer to return to work at 3s. 10d. per ton, screened, on 4 July. This rate was a compromise for both parties; the union had called for 4s. 0d. per ton and the management had previously insisted on 3s. 6d. and 3s. 9d. per ton. The unsympathetic mine manager, R. Elliott, left for the Wallsend Mine. The evidence is inconclusive, but he may have been transferred to improve industrial relations. The directors "resolved to send Mr. Elliott to Greymouth as mine manager and dismiss

---

(34) WES 27 June 1885.
(35) WES 18 June 1885.
(36) WES 30 June 1885.
(37) WT 2 Mar 1886.
(38) WT 30 June 1885.
(39) Salmond, Appendix F. p. 31.
He states that the strike was 'broken' in May when the WCC evicted the strikers and brought in non-union labour. This is not correct. The Denniston miners stood firm until a compromise wage rate was negotiated six weeks later, on 5 July.
The strike had lasted twenty weeks and was spread over seven months. The union emerged from the strike united and determined. Their need had resulted in the organization and affiliation of the Brunnerton and Koranui miners. The support of their brother workers in both Australia and New Zealand had enabled them to hold out long enough to force the WCC to a compromise. The Denniston Coal Miners Mutual Protection Society was in regular contact with the AMA and John Lomas was firmly convinced of the benefits of wider organization and effective affiliation. The settlement did not end the bitterness felt by the mining community towards the free labourers. One night in August, they were attacked and driven out of Denniston by the victorious unionist community. Community had beaten company.

(40) WCC Minute Book, July 8 & 9, 1885.
(41) WES 19 June 1885.
(42) GHA 20 Aug 1885.
1885-9 CONSOLIDATION ON THE 'COAST

...From then on until 1890...we managed to consolidate and get the majority of the Coast miners and labourers with us....

James Carruthers 1

In the New Year the unionists endeavoured to consolidate and expand the Union's position. Eight months after the settlement Lomas re-opened wage negotiations with the WCC. The new rate coupled with erratic employment had eroded their wages. They demanded that the WCC either increase the tonnage rate to four shillings or alter the system of payment. The directors refused the increase and considered importing large numbers of non-union miners from England. 2 In the event, however, they decided that the company could not afford the cost of either this scheme, or of another extended dispute. The new mine manager, Thomas Brown, suggested that some other method of weighing the coal might satisfy both parties. In March he advised the directors that the men would accept 3s. 6d. per ton for coal riddled inside the mine, and weighed by some method other than the 'Fairplay'. 3

In March also, the Denniston Coal Miners Mutual Protection Association completed the arrangements for affiliation to the AMA. 4 As the Koranui, Brunnerton, and now, Coalpit Heath miners' unions were branches of

(1) Salmond, Appendix F, p. 31.
(2) WCC Minute Book, 24 Feb 1886.
(3) WT 16 Mar 1886.
(4) Ibid.
the Denniston Association, they were also affiliated. The object of the AMA was to "embrace all trade organizations in the Southern Hemisphere into one grand Federation". The Association had a membership of 12,280.

By the end of the month the directors had still not agreed to the new system of payment. The miners held a one-day stoppage "to consider the matter". The local executive wrote to the AMA to find out whether they could expect their assistance if they struck to obtain wages equal to those paid in other mines on the West Coast. The WCC could not afford another strike and they eventually agreed to 2s. 10d. per ton for unscreened coal. Labour organization was successful; it was sufficient to defeat the employers.

On Tuesday, 9 November the Denniston Branch of the AMA of Australia celebrated its second anniversary. The union organized a public tea, concert and ball. The Association had made great progress. A satisfactory wage rate had been negotiated and "the good feeling" existing between the company and the miners "had never been better on the Hill". The union had established a Relief Fund. They had successfully amalgamated with the AMA and contributed £252. to various trade disputes "as a proof of the mutual sympathy and good feeling that exists between

---

(5) WT 30 Mar 1886.
(6) WT 9 Nov 1886.
(7) WT 16 Mar 1886.
(8) WT 30 Mar 1886.
(9) WCC Minute Book, 5 May 1886.
BM 11 June 1886.
"That monster, Billy Fairplay has died a natural death".
(10) WT 16 Nov 1886.
our members and their toiling brethren". The union was not only accepted in the district, but seen by many as a "power for good". The Westport dignitaries who spoke at the function were all laudatory. Eugene O'Connor M.H.R., spoke "strongly in support of the right of labour to combine together for the protection of its members against the greed of wealth". He thought that "there could be a no more noble union than Denniston". The mayor of Westport, John Hughes, a wealthy publican, spoke approvingly of their motto "united we stand; divided we fall" and the mine manager congratulated the union on its success.

John Lomas initiated a second round of union organization on the 'Coast in 1889, this time among the labourers. Early in the year the Westport Labour Union was organized. They petitioned the County Council to pay the ruling rate for the district; not less than eight shillings a day for permanent employees, and nine shillings a day for temporary labourers. ¹¹ The County Council agreed, and so did the other employers. In July, Lomas claimed that ten shillings had now become the accepted daily rate for casual labour in the Buller. ¹² The

(¹¹) Buller County Council Minute Book, 27 Mar. 1889. Letter from Joseph Tottenham, Secretary of the Westport Labour Union.
(¹²) GRA 17 July 1889.
momentum of union organization was maintained by a steady
stream of union successes.

Lomas also organized the Cape Foulwind quarrymen. The contract for stone for the Westport harbour works
had been let to Wilkie, Wilson and Company. David
Wilkie refused to pay the labourers the district rate.
After a short dispute he agreed to nine shillings a day
but he sent to Auckland for seventy free labourers and
dismissed the local quarrymen when the new labourers
arrived. The lockout lasted for five weeks, until the
union representatives and the Under-secretary for Public
Works, C.Y. O'Connor, managed to effect a settlement.
The contractors were to pay the district rate and take on
two-thirds of the men locked out, giving married men
preference. The Westport and Denniston unions fully
supported the Cape Foulwind quarrymen. John Lomas led
their negotiations and the Denniston miners contributed
three hundred pounds to support the quarrymen during the
lockout.

In July, the other 'Coast unions threw their
weight behind a demand by the Brunnerton miners that the
Grey Valley Coal Company pay them the same rate as the

(13) AJHR, 1889, I. 6, p. 81.
(14) GRA 17 July 1889.
(15) AJHR, 1889, I. 6, p. 111.
(16) GRA 15 July 1889.
Denniston miners. 17 The company was given forty-eight hours to accept the union's terms. Four shillings per ton over the Fairplay was agreed by the company. 18 Denniston miners had clearly become the advance guard of unionism on the West Coast.

While he was in Greymouth, John Lomas called a public meeting to organize a labour union there. 19 He spoke to the meeting about the situation on Denniston before the union, detailed the history of the strike at Cape Foulwind, and described the formation of the Westport Labour Union, with which the Greymouth Union could be affiliated. He impressed upon the audience the need for organization but stressed the importance of sane and moderate leadership. "He hoped to see trade and labour organizations all over New Zealand" and intended to visit the whole of the 'Coast to encourage working men to organize. 20

By the end of the year Lomas was riding the crest of the union wave. The union successes were capped with a Grand Labour Union Demonstration at Westport on 11 November. 21 Lomas gave the opening address. He traced the rise and progress of labour combination on the 'Coast. After the successes of the past year the unionists on the

---

(17) Ibid.
Their strike fund was augmented by £45, from Denniston, £30, from the Cape Foulwind quarrymen, and £30, from Australia. "A letter from the Seamens' Union was received promising support".

(18) GRA 19 July 1889.
(19) GRA 17 July 1889.
(20) GRA 11 Sept 1889.
3 Dec 1889.
He subsequently visited Reefron and Ahaura.

(21) WES 12 Nov 1889.
This coincided with the fifth anniversary of the formation of the Denniston Coal Miners Mutual Protection Society.
West Coast were united and self-reliant. Eugene O'Connor, M.P. for Buller, said "he was proud of the position Westport had taken in the forefront of the battle against the power of the few to injure the many". Then the unionists presented John Lomas with an illuminated address and a gold watch. O'Connor hoped that the watch would "render him as good service as he had rendered others". 

(22) LT 7 Feb 1890.
(23) WES 12 Nov 1889.
THE MARITIME COUNCIL 'ERA'

These events on the West Coast paralleled a national movement towards wider union organization. The wider vision articulated by Lomas' was not fully shared by the rank and file. Throughout 1889 Lomas fully appreciated the particularism of the miners' outlook and placed great emphasis on his local successes rather than his wider objectives. This is not to say, however, that the miners were unaware of the implications of recent union growth on the 'Coast and elsewhere. In many respects, they were more conscious of hardening attitudes than other workers.

The most recent wave of union activity on the 'Coast was characteristically 'new unionist' in its approach to union organization. The Westport and Greymouth Labour unions were unions of unskilled workers, casual labourers for the most part. John Lomas encouraged every workman to join the union. If these individual unions were linked they would have greater strength.

The formation of the Maritime Council initiated an awareness among the Buller unionists that they were in the vanguard of a great national movement. For some years Lomas had been working towards a similar

---

(2) GRA 17 July 1889.
(3) WES 12 Nov 1889.
aggregation, but within his own sphere. The Denniston Branch of the AMA had been in contact with the Seamens' Union since the strike in 1885. The Maritime Council was formed in Dunedin in October by representatives of the AMA, the Westport and Greymouth Labour Unions, and four Wharf Labourers' Unions. These delegates negotiated a basis of amalgamation for defensive purposes. The Council drew up rules for the regulation and settlement of disputes. D.P. Fisher of the Wharf Labourers' Union became president, J.A. Millar of the Seamens' Union was the elected secretary, and John Lomas, the treasurer.

The Council was non-aggressive by intent, but the combination of such key industrial unions gave it a power that became difficult to ignore. This power was felt by both those in a position to utilize it, and by those who felt threatened by it. During 1890 the previous good feeling that had existed between the employers and the unions on the West Coast began to recede. The demands by the Cape Foulwind quarrymen that they be paid the district rate encountered renewed resistance when the Government resumed control of the Harbour Board and announced that all wages would be reduced. The problem seemed to be solved when the Government agreed to let the work in small contracts directly to the workmen.

---

(4) WES 18 June 1885.
(5) J.B. Salmond, New Zealand Labourers' Pioneering Days, p. 78.
(6) H. Roth, Trade Unions in New Zealand, p. 12.
(7) QBA 4 Feb 1890.
However, the Government would only let the contracts short-term, and non-unionists were given the large mainenance contract. This meant that union members would have to work beside free labourers. The unions were faced with what they interpreted as Government opposition. John Lomas thought that "it was a disgrace and a shame that the Government should lend itself to such an object as that of impoverishing and crushing the working classes". He warned Premier Atkinson that the Cape Foulwind workers had "the fullest sympathy and support of the Maritime Council and of all the trades-unions in the colonies".

There is evidence that attitudes were hardening. In March, a general meeting of the Westport Labour Union passed a resolution to prohibit all "bona fide" businessmen from speaking, voting or otherwise influencing the union. The unionists were becoming conscious of a separate identity. They wanted the labouring classes to be directly represented in parliament, and John Lomas was asked by a workingmen's meeting at Cape Foulwind to stand for the Inangahua electorate in the next general election. He refused; "Labour needed no direct representation, as they were in a position to obtain all they needed from the Government without it."
The 'Coast unions were all affiliated to become the Amalgamated Miners' and Labourers' Association (AMLA). Lomas had decided to extend this organization beyond the West Coast. He travelled extensively in March, and organized unions at Shag Point, Green Island, and Kaitangata. A union was also formed at Kamo, near Whangerei. The AMLA was now a national organization. It had twelve branches and claimed two thousand members. 13

When John Lomas spoke to a meeting in Christchurch in April, some of his ideas had changed. 14 His previous caution was less evident. He supported the proposal of the Maritime Council to establish a Defence Fund to obviate the necessity of special levies, where previously he had regarded such reserves as a temptation to strike. 15 He now fully supported the function of the Maritime Council as a 'political watchdog'. 16 He continued to advocate arbitration and moderation. The advantage of a strong body such as the Maritime Council was that it made employers cautious where they would not hesitate if only one union was involved. It was characteristic of John Lomas that his speech expressed great hope. He hoped that one day every man would be a unionist. They had succeeded on the West Coast; "there the Union included every working

(13) LT 31 Mar 1890. There were branches of the AMLA at Denniston, Brunnerton, Cape Foulwind, Westport, Reefton, Ahaura, Greymouth, Mokihinui, Shag Point, Kaitangata, Green Island and Kamo.
(14) LT 1 Apr 1890.
(15) GHA 17 July 1889.
(16) GHA 13 Dec 1889.
He advised the Ahaura men not to introduce party politics into their union as there was a danger of the unions becoming mere political clubs.
man". He hoped that a minimum wage would become accepted in New Zealand, and that then "the last chapter on strikes and lock-outs would be written". The solidarity of labour would achieve these objectives. The working men of the Colony were beginning to realize that they must work together for their own benefit. "Let them remember they were brothers and sisters in one great battle, and work to assist one another".\(^{17}\)
THE MARITIME STRIKE

In the months before the Maritime Strike relations between the miners and the companies worsened. In July, the Grey Valley Coal Company asked the Brunnerton miners to accept a twenty per cent wage reduction. It was claimed that the Company was working at a loss, due to the high wage rates they were forced to pay.¹ When the miners refused, they were locked out. As part of the union attempts to secure a settlement the Denniston miners imposed a darg; they limited the output from the WCC mines. They worked only nine days in the fortnight. This kept the weekly production levels in line with the average over the last six months and prevented the WCC from supplying the Brunnerton market.² Industrial relations on Denniston deteriorated sharply. The efficiency of the mine was impaired, production costs rose, and the management became less sympathetic towards the men.³ The Denniston miners also called for a complete boycott of the small Waimangaroa mine. The mine was being temporarily worked by non-unionists who were supplying the Union Steamship Company with one hundred tons a day. A settlement was reached at Brunner at the end of the month. The miners agreed to resume work at the reduced rate until a Royal Commission was convened.

¹ O'Farrell, pp. 60-5.
² AJHR, 1891, Session II, C. 3, pp. 189-191.
to investigate the situation. The Denniston Committee was on the verge of lifting the restriction when the Maritime Strike overtook them.

The Maritime Strike began for the Denniston miners on 28 August. The manager was informed by the Executive that the union had received instructions from the Maritime Council to cease work at once. Work could continue only if the WCC would sign a written guarantee not to supply coal to the Union Steamship Company. This was a demand unlikely to be met. The WCC and the Union Company were closely linked, and they had recently contracted to take the total WCC tonnage 'free-on-board' at Westport. The Union Steamship Company had been stock-piling coal. For this reason, the darg imposed by the WCC miners had been irritating to both companies, and the Union Company had been forced to supplement Coalbrookdale coal with the inferior coal produced at the Waimangaroa Mine.

Westport felt the impact of the strike before Denniston. Business quickened as people stocked up in anticipation. The Westport Labour Union Committee received instructions from the Maritime Council to boycott Union Company steamers on 28 August. This action was approved that evening at the general meeting of the Westport

(4) O'Farrell, p. 66.
(5) AJHR, 1891, Session II, C. 3, p. 192.
(6) WCC Abstracts of Deeds and Agreements, p. 25.
(7) LT 28 Aug 1890.
The Union Company was reported to have stock-piled 11,000 tons. A trans-Tasman steamer used 100-150 tons.
(8) GRA 23 Aug 1890.
Branch of the AMLA. Unionists would refuse to work alongside free labour. The Wharf Lumpers loading the Mawhera and Mahinapua were the first to be called out. When the railwaymen were ordered to load the steamers they were also called out. They were promptly suspended, and all railway services were cancelled. The steamers were loaded by the Westport Manager of the Union Steamship Company, his office staff, and "several townspeople".

A meeting of concerned citizens the following evening was well-attended. The meeting was informed that Westport could only hold out for three weeks with the existing supply of food. Denniston had scarcely enough food for another week. Both shipping lines had increased their freight charges by fifty per cent and the Manawatu was expected with non union labourers. Westport was "all excitement". The meeting decided to form a Chamber of Commerce and elected a committee to guide the township through the crisis.

Country constables were brought in to Westport and put on duty at the wharf, but the Manawatu was unloaded quietly. The crowd there remained orderly. All the railwaymen had been asked to load coal on to the Union steamers, and had consequently been called out. The District Manager's son and a guard were working the

(9) GRA 30 Aug 1890.
(10) LT 30 Aug 1890.
(11) Ibid.
locomotive. No regular trains were running. Extra policemen had been requested. The Chamber of Commerce endeavoured to settle the railway dispute but the commissioners would not negotiate. Nine railway-men were dismissed outright for refusing normal duties, and the other fifty-two, who had refused to shovel coal, were given twelve hours to return to work. They refused and were dismissed also.

Attention now became focussed on Denniston. The WCC Directors had refused the miners' terms and the unionists had voted to remain on strike. John Lomas was not at Denniston when the strike occurred and the miners took this decision alone. Lomas had constantly cautioned unionists:

...against the folly of striking without consideration. Members of unions were too fond of striking, and for this he blamed the leaders of the Trades Unions who should not go with the tide of the opinions of the majority, but have the courage to tell men when they were wrong...when they got the whip in their hands they should not be too anxious to use it....

It seems that the older, more cautious miners may have

12 Sept 1890.
13 Sept 1890.
14 Sept 1890.
15 Sept 1890.
16 Apr 1890.
been outvoted by the young, inexperienced men. By the time Lomas returned the decision had been taken. He advised the miners to make terms and return to work. There was no hope of any support. But "unfortunately they were not in the humour just then to throw in the sponge".

The WCC now acted in a determined way. They immediately advertised for free labourers on a twelve monthly basis.

The first 'blacklegs' were at work in the mine when John Lomas travelled to Wellington to represent the AMLA at the Labour Conference. The Association had 782 men out on strike. The Conference had been reluctantly called by the Government in an effort to encourage a settlement. The Labour organizations were fully represented, but McLean of the Union Steamship Company was the only employers' representative present. John Lomas put the miners' case:

(17) Salmond, Appendix F, p. 31. James Carruthers also was opposed to the miners involvement in the strike. See also Department of Labour Library, unsigned manuscript. "Lomas became dissatisfied because some miners refused to accept his advice".

(18) Salmond, Appendix F, p. 33. (letter from John Lomas) "The Maritime Strike was a most unfortunate strike so far as the shore unions were concerned, and personally I never did approve of the miners coming out with the seamen".

(19) LT 9 Sept 1890.
(20) LT 2 Oct 1890.
(21) LT 20 Sept 1890.
(22) H. Roth, p. 3.
...we could do nothing else than stand loyally by the seamen...I cannot see how we could possibly hold our own unless affiliated; and we are not going to sit down and allow the Union Company, or any other powerful company, to quietly break up our ranks; and for us to go on working to supply the Union Company with coal would be to assist that company and the free labourers to crush us out of existence...I am pretty certain we shall stand quietly by the seamen until the end of the strike, no matter whether it is a bitter end or a sweet one...

The extensive use of free labour by the companies did not alarm him. Once before the WCC had imported free labourers in an attempt to break a strike on Denniston. It proved extremely expensive.

Even while he was speaking, the strike was virtually over in Westport. Railwaymen had been imported to replace the men dismissed. Enough free labour was available to work the wharf, and the two non-union mines supplied Westport with coal. At the Ngakawau Mine, coal was being mined by the Union Company's office staff. Unionism was not so firmly established in Westport that men were able to resist the offer of employment during a time when so little was available.

It was more difficult for the Denniston coalminers

---

(23) AJHR, 1891, Session I, H. 1, p. 15.
(24) AJHR, 1891, Session I, H. 1, p. 15. "Our company lost very little money indeed until those free labourers entered the mine during the last strike".
(25) GRA 17 Sept 1890.
LT 26 Sept 1890. "More free labour is offering than is required".
(26) LT 23 Sept 1890.
(27) GRA 17 Sept 1890.
to hold out in 1890 that in had been in 1885. Then, they were well supported financially. The WCC had learnt from its mistakes. Many men were desperate for steady employment in 1890 and the WCC could afford to select those men most suited to coal mining. They engaged large numbers of free labourers, determined not to be short of labour again.

The free labourers were bitterly resented. The first to arrive were subjected to the scorn of the women and children, who followed them banging their pots and kerosene tins. Almost the entire police force was stationed now at Denniston and Waimangaroa. 28 The free labourers were first employed building their huts at Coalbrookdale, three miles away from the main settlement.

The miners had been out of work now for a month, and their strike fund must have been almost exhausted. Fifteen miners left Denniston to work in the Mokihinui Mine. Four brakesmen scabbed and the WCC could effectively run the incline. Local feeling ran high. The miners and their wives, three hundred strong, congregated outside the house of one of the scabbing incline workers and burnt his effigy. Twelve more constables arrived to reinforce the large force already on Denniston. The WCC was expecting one hundred and fifty free labourers the following day. 29

The Brunner arrived in Westport on 7 October, with free labourers from Dunedin and Lyttelton. The Kanier with free labour from Wellington put into port half an

---

(28) GRA 3 Oct 1890.
(29) IM 9 Oct 1890.

Twenty-five police were stationed at Denniston.
hour later. The wharf was crowded and every available constable on duty. The one hundred and sixty free labourers were rapidly transferred from the steamers on to the special train waiting on the wharf. The train left immediately for Waimangaroa. From there, the men were escorted up the Denniston Track by a detachment of police headed by Colonel Hume, Major Webb, and Inspector Goodall. They were marched to Coalbrookdale where the WCC had provided a hot dinner. 30

The free labourers were under contract to work for the WCC for twelve months. For the first month they were to be paid ten shillings a day and keep. After that they would go on to the same tonnage rate that the WCC had paid the miners. 31 The day after they arrived, the free labourers were put to work filling slack in the mine. 32 The Company had a slight setback when part of the incline collapsed but once it was repaired the Denniston miners began to see that their position was serious. The WCC already had enough men to work the mine and yet they continued to bring in more free labour. 33 The management prosecuted twelve unionists who trespassed on Company property and attempted to speak to the free labourers. 34 When sixty more free labourers arrived 35 the miners appointed a deputation to approach Mr. Waters, the Managing

---

(30) LT 7 Oct 1890.
(31) GHA 8 Oct 1890.
(32) GHA 9 Oct 1890.
(33) Ibid.
"Many of the free labourers were quartz and alluvial miners".
(34) GRA 9 Oct 1890.
(35) LT 24 Oct 1890.
Engineer. He refused to see them, and the directors endorsed his refusal. 36

The mining families suffered greatly. James Ward recalled when he attempted to pack a twenty-five pound bag of flour on the Denniston Track during the strike, as a boy. The wild goats were all killed for food. 37

Still, they resolutely continued the fight. They hoped that the tide was beginning to turn, and it seemed that it might be when they received one hundred pounds from the AMA. 38 They immediately made an offer to the Cardiff Company for the right to lease or purchase the Mokihirui Mine. They planned to work the mine co-operatively. 39

Free labour continued to arrive at Denniston. Forty-three more came from Hokitika. "Most of them are young and active, and many have been used to goldmining". Sixty more were expected from Ross. 40 On 18 November, John Lomas resigned his position as President, and left for Australia to appeal for steady financial support on behalf of the Denniston miners. 41 Many of the miners had already left Denniston, but those who stayed did so in distressed circumstances. The WCC had flatly refused to re-employ certain miners. Those miners approved of were required to

(36) GRA 25 Oct 1890.
(38) LT 3 Nov 1890.
(39) GRA 3 Nov 1890.
(40) LT 7 Nov 1890.
(41) Salmond, Appendix F, p. 33. GRA 15 Nov 1890.
sign an agreement not to associate with a union for twelve months - a galling proposition to those men who had led the union movement on the 'Coast. Several of them did return to work, and the WCC notified the rest that the mine was now fully staffed. 42

When John Lomas returned it was all over. 43 The community had been broken along with the union. People had just drifted away. Some lucky miners were able to work the Mokihinui Co-operative Mine. Denniston miners later tendered co-operatively for sections of the Mokihinui Railway. 44 Those who stayed either lived on in grim poverty, or scabbed. Three hundred and thirty-five men joined the Maritime Strike in August. At the end of November only fifty remained. 45

(42) LT 20 Nov 1890.
(43) See Appendix IV, pp. 154-5.
(44) GRA 2 Apr 1891.
(45) LT 20 Sept 1890.

"The Company have some 400 men employed, 50 of whom are old residents".
Wise's, 1890-1, p. 142 and 1894-5, p. 243.
83 of the households recorded on Denniston in 1890 were no longer there in 1894; sixty per cent of the recorded population.
One of these miners who left the Hill in 1890 was Frederick Smallhoime, great-grandfather of the author. He shifted his family to Seddonville, and worked in the Mokihinui Mine.
CHAPTER V

DENNISTON AND WESTPORT

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT

Until the rise of coal, Westport had depended on the declining gold industry for its livelihood. The coming of a new industry changed the face of the established community. Contrary to the general economic pattern in the 'eighties, Westport grew rapidly and experienced relative prosperity. The rest of the South Island was given over to increasing depression after 1882, as the effects of falling wool and wheat prices were felt. For a time, the North Island was insulated by its greater range of exports, (dairy produce, coal, timber, and gum), but the depression gradually moved north. By 1887 it covered the whole country.

Westport received a great boost from the development of the coal industry. The area was introduced to large-scale public works. The Westport to Ngakawau railway was constructed and local firms successfully competed for contracts from the WCC. The harbour improvement scheme was another large labour employer.

Continued prosperity was assured. Once the industry was established the number of men who could be permanently employed in Westport grew steadily. The entire output of

(1) McCaskill, 10/9.
(2) Sinclair and Mandle, pp.99-100.
the WCC mines had to pass through the port. Railwaymen, wharf labourers, and seamen were required to cope with the trade. Railway and Harbour Board workshops were built.

The extra money in circulation encouraged the expansion of the business community. Alone, the wages paid the seventy railwaymen employed at Westport contributed an extra two hundred pounds a week to the local economy. Westport became the service centre for the growing mining population. The business people petitioned the Railway Department to put on a special market train on Saturdays, so that the people from Denniston could shop in town. Business became keenly competitive. A Westport correspondent wrote that "the local harbour works expenditure not only brought about keen competition, but also presented our business friends with consumers from every nook and corner in the colony". By 1890 Westport boasted two breweries, twenty-two hotels, four newspapers, five lawyers, fifteen drapers, and "numerous" storekeepers.

Nevertheless, pockets of unemployment did appear. During 1884 and 1885 unemployed from other parts of New Zealand streamed in to Westport hoping to obtain work with the new Harbour Board. Men thrown out of work by the mine strike compounded the problem. As the harbour works had started slowly, employment became scarce. The Westport Times observed early in 1886 that "a strong wave of depression" was

---

(3) LT 1 Sept 1890.
(4) GNA 4 Nov 1884.
(5) GNA 5 Aug 1890.
(6) WES 16 Jan 1885.
flowing over the colony. The paper carried a series of articles on the writings of Henry George and his ideas on single tax began to be canvassed in Westport as a means of ending depression. Westport now had an unemployment problem. Thirty men who had been out of work for three months approached the Mayor, J. Hughes, who called a public meeting. The men had been waiting for the railway and the quarry works to get underway. The meeting urged the Harbour Board to push their works ahead more vigorously. The Harbour Board managed to employ sixteen of the men, and the Borough Council found work for another eight. 7

It seems that enough work was available during the years following 1886, and when the Westport Labour Union was established. In 1890 the local economy took a sharp downturn. It was reported in August that Westport was reeling from an "epidemic of bankruptcy". 8 Work had been scaled down at the Cape Foulwind quarry. The Commissioners had notified the railwaymen of a wage reduction. 9 The Maritime Strike almost certainly intensified this recession in Westport by reducing the purchasing power of the strikers.

Generally, however, during the 'eighties, Westport had been insulated by the coal industry from the worst effects of the depression. The attitude of the community towards the industry, was conditioned accordingly.

(7) WT 19 Mar 1886.
(8) GRA 5 Aug 1890.
(9) LT 1 Apr 1890.
Politics in New Zealand in the 'eighties "ran on railway tracks": the issues were those of development. Characteristically, localism dominated politics in Westport for the greater part of the decade. The electoral contests were based on personalities and promises. The newspapers barracked for the candidate they favoured and slandered the others. For instance, the Westport Times warned its readers in 1881 that Eugene O'Connor only posed as the working man's friend. "His past conduct as a politician proves to demonstration that the traits of class are strong within him".

Goldfield's businessmen dominated public life in Westport during the 'eighties. The three most prominent political figures were John Munro, Eugene O'Connor, and John Hughes. All were self-made men, who had made the most of their opportunities. John Munro was the mayor of Westport from 1879-81, and M.H.R. from 1881 until 1884. He arrived in Dunedin from Scotland in 1862, and went into business first as a stationer, and then as an auctioneer. In 1867, he followed the gold trail to the 'Coast and settled in Westport. Eugene O'Connor represented the Buller

(1) K. Sinclair, A History of New Zealand, p. 166.
(2) WT 2 Dec 1881.
(3) Westport had four mayors and two M.H.R in the decade from 1880 to 1900.
electorate from 1884 to 1893. He emigrated from Ireland in 1854 to the goldfields of Victoria, then on to Otago, and later Westland. John Hughes was very much a local politician. He was Mayor of Westport from 1884-7, a Borough Councillor, and a member of the Harbour Board. Welsh by birth, like O'Conor he had been lured to the Victorian goldfields. In 1859 he set up business as a publican at Geelong. He crossed to Otago in the rush of 1861. In 1865 he set up the Albion Hotel in Greymouth. He moved to Westport in 1867, where he bought the Maori Hotel for £1,000. and re-named it the Empire.

Buller politics in the 1880's was characterised by close fought contests between Munro and O'Conor. In 1881 Munro was the victor, in 1884 and 1887 it was O'Conor's turn. During his term in office, from 1881-4, Munro worked closely with the principals of the WCC. In November 1883, he called a public meeting on behalf of a Special Committee of WCC Directors. The directors hoped to induce the citizens of Westport "to urge on the Government the necessity of pushing on more energetically with the harbour works". At the

---

During the seventies O'Conor had represented Buller in the Nelson Provincial Council. He became Provincial Secretary and Treasurer and when the provinces were abolished he was appointed to wind up the affairs of the Council. He was the M.H.R. for Buller from 1871-5.

He was also an officer in the first volunteer corps, captain of the fire brigade, chairman of the School Committee, a vestryman at St. John's Church, an Oddfellow and Freemason, and vice-president of the Kawatiri Rowing Club.

(7) WCC Minute Book, 26 Oct 1883.
meeting, R. Gillies, chairman of the WCC, described the benefits that the town would derive from the harbour works and an expanded coal trade. The company was prepared to transfer their head office from Dunedin as a measure of their faith in Westport. 8 Munro aligned himself with the Atkinson Ministry in an attempt to obtain government support for the Westport Harbour Board Bill. His efforts to help the WCC regularize and increase the tonnage shipped from Westport were rewarded in 1884 when the Denniston voters almost block-voted for him.

O'Connor, however, outbid Munro as a local advocate. 9 He ensured that the Westport Harbour Bill was passed. He drafted the bill, published it in pamphlet form, and made sure that every member had a copy. The Bill appealed because the Government did not have to pay for the harbour works directly. O'Connor proposed that the Government transfer the royalties paid on the Waimangaroa railway line to the Harbour Board, to be used as security for the amount borrowed. WCC shares increased in value from ten to thirty shillings in anticipation of the passage of the bill. 10 Westport was jubilant when it finally became law. Bonfires were lit throughout the entire district, and the crowds who were celebrating in Westport and Denniston raised cheers for Eugene O'Connor and Sir Julius Vogel.

"By twentieth-century standards there were quite

---

(8) WT 6 Nov 1883.
(9) WT 25 July 1884.
(10) GWA 21 Oct 1884.
unacceptably close links between business and politics". 11
In the debate on the Westport Harbour Board Bill it was
alleged that public expenditure was being directed to
Westport for the benefit of the WCC, a private company. 12
Several large shareholders of the WCC were certainly in a
position to exert a great influence on the government.
R. Gillies was the M.H.R. for Bruce. R. Campbell, H.J.Millar,
R. Oliver and W.H.J. Reynolds were all members of the
Legislative Council. 13 W.J.M. Larnach was the Minister for
Mines and Marine in the Stout-Vogel Ministry.
O'Conor and many towns-people swung against the WCC
in 1886 when they publicized their intention to purchase
the Koramui Mine and close it down. A Vigilance Committee
was formed by concerned citizens to oppose the amalgamation
of the leases on the Buller coalfield. 14 John Lomas
communicated to them the support of the resident of Denniston. 15
When the Vigilance Committee "addressed themselves to the
Minister of Mines, who was himself a shareholder...all they
got was an offensive answer". 16 It was also suspected that

(11) K. Sinclair, p. 163.
S.E. Shrimski, MHR for Oamaru.
(13) See Appendix II, The Directors of the WCC, pp. 148-151.
Robert Campbell held 787 shares in 1884.
(14) WT 13 Aug 1886.
(15) WT 24 Aug 1886.
O'Conor in the debate on the Westport Harbour;
The debate principally raged between O'Conor and
W.D. Stewart and W.J.M. Larnach, who defended the
WCC, at the expense of O'Conor's character.
the influential WCC directors had blocked an attempt to have the railway line extended as far as the proposed Mokihinui Mine. O'Connor took his public duties seriously and he reacted sharply against the coal monopoly in the Buller; "it was my duty to see that such an enormous public estate was not handed over for the benefit of a few private individuals". 17

O'Connor's stand against the WCC and monopoly was the main issue of the 1887 election in the Buller. 18 He wanted the coal industry to be locally based, and he financially supported the Mokihinui Coal Company. He would wield all the influence he possessed to induce the government to continue the railway to the Mokihinui coalfield. Munro campaigned on behalf of the WCC. He alleged that O'Connor was doing his level best to injure the company. Westport relied on the WCC for its prosperity, now and in the future. 19 The towns-people thought otherwise, and O'Connor retained his seat. 20

O'Connor publicly supported the labour movement, and vigorously represented his unionist constituents in the House. In the debate on the Eight Hours Bill in 1889 he challenged his colleagues to declare whether they were aligned with capital or labour. He would never be too proud to call

---

(18) Ibid.  
"This point was made a test question at the late elections, and every attempt was made to unseat me, and if it was not that I thoroughly represent the views of the people of Westport I should not be here now".

(19) In the absence of any newspaper records to verify the progress of political campaigning in the Buller in 1887 the evidence is drawn from these second-hand reports aired in parliament.

(20) AJHR, 1887, Session II, H, 13, p. 2.
himself a working man. He hoped that one day the members opposing the bill would be within reach of a trades union. During the Maritime Strike, O'Conor called on the Government to persuade the Railway Commissioners to grant an amnesty to the railwaymen. "It is a great consideration in the cause of justice and fair-play that these men should not be punished for the acts of loyalty which they display towards their union". The shipping companies were entirely to blame for the strike in his opinion. The Union Steamship Company knew they were dealing with union labour and by introducing free labour they put the men into a position "which they were bound in honour not to accept".

Consequently the strike was not an election issue in the Buller. John Lomas had declared in April that he would "support any man who would do his best to raise the class that he represented". Although O'Conor remained unaligned, he was elected unopposed.

---

(22) NZPD, Vol LXIX, 15 Sept 1890, pp. 905-6.
(23) Ibid.
(24) LT 1 Apr 1890.
(25) LT 28 Nov 1890.
(26) LT 2 Oct 1890, (from a Westland correspondent).

He was described as doubtful in the company of Liberal Opposition, Liberal Independent, Conservative Ministerial, and Conservative Independent.

---

No-one has yet expressed himself as determined to beard the "Buller lion" and it would seem at present as if Mr. O'Conor would have a walk-over. He gets a great deal of support from different sections, and those who led the attack upon him at the last elections are not in a position to do so now. Labour complications and a partial readjustment of parties have so altered the position that many who were his strongest opponents before are now his friends. And besides, has he not got the Westport - Ngakawau Railway Bill passed?...
Labour interests did, however, attempt to find a labour candidate for the Inangahua electorate where the sitting member was less sympathetic. The Cape Foulwind quarrymen who were included in this electorate, wanted John Lomas to stand. When he refused, the Greymouth coalminers delegate to the Wellington Labour Conference, George Ansell, was approached.²⁷ He also declined the nomination. In the event, a Reefton businessman, J. Drake, stood unsuccessfully against the sitting member as an unofficial labour candidate.²⁸

Increasing political awareness during the decade was paralleled by increasing class feeling. The Denniston coal miners appeared on the horizon as an organized, class-based group.²⁹ John Lomas acted always on behalf of the working or wage-earning classes.³⁰ The industrial troubles on the coalfield antagonized the business community. Although the union attempted to publicize their grievances during the long strike that began in 1884, the Westport business community was resentful at this interruption to their general prosperity. The Westport Evening Star informed its readers that the revenue taken by the Harbour Board from the Waimangaroa Railway had fallen by two-thirds.³¹

(27) GRA 20 Oct 1890.
(29) Olssen, p. 22. The term class is used to mean a "conflict group" or a "sociological group with a life of its own".
(30) WES 25 July 1889.
(31) WES 11 Mar 1885.
One irate correspondent attributed the strike to the advent on Denniston of a few agitators, who exerted "a powerful influence over a certain class of men". 32

The events during the Maritime Strike further accentuated class differences. In March 1890, the Westport Labour Union had passed a resolution which prohibited businessmen from influencing the union. 33 When union labour refused to work the Union Company steamers, several businessmen helped the Westport Manager of the Union Steamship Company and his office staff to load them up. 34 The Westport correspondent to the Grey River Argus felt that the "stupendous works" performed by the WCC should have entitled them to every consideration from "the labouring classes". "What would Westport be but for these brave pioneers?" 35 Generally the Westport business community remained neutral.

Although both the business and the labouring sections of the community were moving towards more intransigent positions the differences were, as yet, by no means irreconcilable. John Lomas had sought not to destroy capitalism, but to civilize it. The widening gulf between capital and labour brought about a realignment of political allegiances.

(33) LT 28 Mar 1890.
(34) LT 30 Aug 1890.
(35) GHA 9 Oct 1890.
CHAPTER VI

EPILOGUE

The 1890's was a decade of consolidation for the Buller coal industry. Another coal lease was opened by the WCC at Granity Creek, as the mines were increasingly mechanized and modernized. Unionism revived only slowly after the collapse of 1890. A new miners' union was formed on the Denniston plateau in 1895. Labour organization, however, lacked the independence of the movement led by John Lomas in the 1880's. Like other New Zealand unionists, the Buller miners now put aside their initial reservations, and chose to register under the 1894 Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. The protective nature of the Act nurtured union growth on Denniston as it did elsewhere in New Zealand. Support for arbitration and unquestioned loyalty to 'King Dick' Seddon were the props of the miners' tactics in 1890's.

The WCC had weathered the Maritime Strike well. Although it had cost the company £20,000 in extra expenses and lost production, the property had lost none of its promise. The management had installed two new hydraulic brakes and bins for storing coal at the head of the incline. 250 steel tubs had been added to the surface haulage system. In 1891 the Coalbrookdale Mine had achieved the distinction of being the first mine in New Zealand to

have produced one million tons of coal. 2 It had now reached the limit of its possible yearly output. At the ninth Annual Meeting of shareholders the directors announced their intention to develop the WCC's secondary lease at Gravity Creek.

The new coal lease was a substantial one. It lay ten miles to the north of Denniston, at an elevation of 1,500 feet. The WCC estimated that it contained thirty million tons of coal. 3 Once again, the company was faced with the problems of access, but the management was able to draw upon their experience at Denniston. This time, an endless rope-road in two stages, was to travel the entire distance from the proposed Millerton mine, down to the storage bins, and workshops at Gravity Creek. 4 There, the coal would be screened and loaded directly into government railway wagons, ready to begin the journey to Westport. The handling of the coal was reduced and modern screening machinery installed. The company aimed to make the plant "the most perfect of its kind in Australasia"; 5 and in the view of the Commission on Coal Mines in 1901, they succeeded.

In 1893 the WCC shareholders received the first substantial dividend ever paid out by the company, 9.1/6 per cent. The tonnage produced from the Coalbrookdale Mine was

(2) McCaskill, 11/5.
(3) Westport Coal Company Limited, from the Otago Witness, 11 and 18 July 1895.
(4) AJHR, 1894, C-3B, p.3.
(5) AJHR, 1901, C. 4, p. 12.
not greatly expanded, but the works were more efficient. The Buller River bar no longer gave cause for concern. The development work at Graniity Creek was progressing steadily and the year's working was "most encouraging". The trend towards greater profitability did not continue. During the following two years the WCC encountered renewed competition from Newcastle coal. Furthermore, an expensive piece of ground had to be worked through in the Coalbrookdale mine. The shareholders were naturally disappointed by the reversal. James Smith, who held 500 shares, put to the directors the possibility of importing coalminers from Newcastle to reduce the cost of Coalbrookdale coal to a competitive level. In view of the depressed state of the coal industry in Australia, he thought that miners would very probably be content with low wages. The directors promised to review the situation. Company profitability continued to deteriorate during 1895. Competition from New South Wales coal intensified and the mine was often closed due to lack of trade.

In an attempt to reduce the selling price of their coal, the directors mounted a direct attack on the wage rates. Although the hewing rate had remained at 2s. 10d.

(6) Chairman's Report to the eleventh Annual Meeting of shareholders, 8 Feb 1893.
(7) Thirteenth Annual Meeting of shareholders, 13 Feb 1895.
(8) AJHR, 1895, C-3B, p. 4.
(9) WN, 15 Sept 1896.
A.B. Lindop, mine manager; "The reductions were forced upon us by the Directors".
per ton after the Maritime Strike in 1890, the management had steadfastly adhered to the principle of 'freedom of contract'. The WCC employed whom they wished. The management had taken the opportunity also, to reduce the number of workers paid contract rates. Many of the 'free labourers' were still paid day-rates and not the contract rates they had been promised. In March 1895, the miners in the Ironbridge section were given two weeks notice. On the day they were to quit the WCC offered to re-employ them, but at the lower rate of 2s. 6d. per ton. The management repeated these tactics, section by section. The miners grumbled, but there was;

...no cohesion amongst the men, many of them were men who had replaced the strikers during the '90 strike and were looked upon with great disfavour by the old hands; consequently there was only one alternative to accepting the terms - that was to leave. But where to go was the problem.

The reduction was accepted. In July a new rate was announced; 2s. 3d. per ton. A meeting of miners was called to discuss the situation and the men appointed a deputation to interview the manager. He refused to delay the reduction or give an assurance that it would be the last. Although evidence concerning the establishing of the new miners' union is scanty, it appears that the 'old hands' took the initiative. H. Roth refers to clandestine meetings on the plateau, with admission by password only.

---

(10) Ibid.
(11) Dan Moloney Collection, Vol 1, p. 144.
(12) WN 15 Sept. 1896.
(13) Moloney, op. cit.
(14) Roth, p. 21.
The miners decided to obtain registration under the Industrial Arbitration and Conciliation Act, and file a dispute with the Board of Conciliation. An executive was elected but before registration could be effected several of them received notice of dismissal. The secretary, Joe Hollows, was appointed to the position of the miners' check-weighman, and new officers were elected. Renewed aggression by the company buried the differences existing between the 'old hands' and 'new chums' as nothing else could have, and the new executive was much more representative. Unionism was clearly seen to be for extensive reasons.

The Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1894 was devised and championed by W.P. Reeves. Conciliation Boards were set up in each industrial district to settle disputes. If either party was unsatisfied with the ruling of the Board, the case could be taken to the Arbitration Court, to be heard by a Supreme Court judge and two elected assessors. An award by the Arbitration Court was legally binding on both parties.

The Denniston dispute was heard first by the Conciliation Board, but the WCC would not accept the ruling and appealed to the Arbitration Court. At the hearing, A. Jamieson, who spoke for the WCC, thought that "the dispute would narrow itself down to the hewing rate and

---

(15) Moloney, op. cit.
(17) AJHR, 1897, H. 6. p. vi.
freedom of contract". 18 John Foster, president of the Denniston Industrial Association of Workmen, outlined the cause of the dispute and called on the court to fix a scale of charges. Furthermore, the men wanted the work to be offered to miners on Denniston before new hands were put on, and some procedure established for the reinstatement of the men in their view, wrongfully dismissed. The Arbitration Court found for the WCC on the hewing rate; the scale of charges in the award fixed the tonnage rate at 2s. 4d. On the question of freedom of contract however, the court laid down conditions of employment which bound the WCC to distribute the work rather than lay off, and to employ Denniston miners before outsiders. 19 The Denniston Miners' Union had fought the action to a satisfactory conclusion, and used the arbitration system to gain recognition.

Union organization in the 1890's was of a very different kind to that known by the 'old hands' in the years before the Maritime Strike. No leader of John Lomas' calibre emerged. The elected officers of the Denniston Industrial Association of Workmen were generally recent arrivals. The president, John Foster, and the secretary, James Patz, had both arrived on the plateau in 1892. 20 They worked within the provisions of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act to improve the miners'
lot, although the tonnage rate awarded by the court in 1896 left many of the 'old hands' dissatisfied. To the miners accustomed to the old hewing rate, it meant a loss of fifteen shillings a week. When the WCC violated the terms or spirit of the award, the union sued for a breach of the agreement. The memories of 1890 were so recent that strike action was scarcely mentioned.

The miners were convinced that they would "receive justice" at the hands of Seddon, and the Liberal Party. Their faith was regarded in 1891 when Seddon, as Minister of Mines, drafted a Coal Mines Bill which recognized eight hours as a day's work, and made provision for a service certificate to be awarded to practical miners. Employers were required to contribute to an accident fund for their workers, and the state was given emergency powers to resume and work the coal mines during industrial trouble.

As a result, in 1893, the candidate most firmly aligned with the Liberal Party, received the miners' support. Eugene O'Conor lost his seat to Roderick McKenzie, a local contractor. O'Conor's independent stance seems

---

(21) Dan Moloney Collection, Vol 1, p. 144. "As the average output per man would be in the vicinity of five tons per day" this meant that the average earnings were reduced by 2s. 6d. per day.
(22) AJHR, 1899, H. 11, p. 24. See p. 139.
(23) GRA 20 Feb 1891 (a Denniston correspondent).
(25) Who's Who in New Zealand and the Western Pacific, 1908, p. 115. McKenzie was a Scot. He had emigrated first to Canada, and arrived in Otago in 1869. He followed the gold rush to the West Coast where he was known as an engineer and bridge-builder.
to have cost him the election. The correspondent from
Granity Creek to the *Grey River Argus* argued that 'the
local people' didn't want a representative who 'sat on
the fence'; 26 In 1896 McKenzie moved to Nelson, and
the miners' union supported P.J. O'Regan, a local journalist
and prominent single-taxer. 27

When a Westland Trades and Labour Council was
inaugurated at Reefton in 1897, the Denniston miners were
represented, 28 but labour organization no longer emanated
from the plateau. This more simply put the Denniston miners
into the mainstream of New Zealand labour organization, which
was similarly moderate and defensive in nature. The Council
assumed the functions of a Liberal Association. 29 The
annual meeting was held at Westport in 1898. The delegates
announced that the Council had convened first to discuss
"the various labour measures". The second priority was "if
possible to bring about the betterment of the condition of
the working class on the West Coast". 30 Yet immediate coal-
field grievances held centre stage. They discussed the
Eight Hours Bill, the Sunday Labour in Mines Prevention Act,
the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, and the
Coal-Mines Bill, and forwarded a long list of recommendations
to Seddon.

The coal miner's position within the mine had
steadily deteriorated throughout the decade. Mechanization,
and the increased division and specialization of labour reduced the importance of the coal hewer. In 1889, 65% of all colliery workers at Denniston were coalminers. Ten years later, in 1900, they were reduced to 10% of the total. 31

The 'iron man' was the device which eroded the miners' position so dramatically, and it first appeared in the WCC mines in 1897. The 'iron man' was a coal-cutting machine used for holing, or undercutting the face of coal. The coalminer did this job with a pick before he blasted the coal down to fill into the waiting coal tubs. The pick machine holed the coal, and a machine boy would shovel the slack out from under the machine with a long-handled shovel. Shot-firers would be called in to blast the coal, and then fillers shovelled it into the coal tubs.

The 'iron man' was bitterly resented. The mine manager, A.B. Lindop, recalled that:

...When we introduced machinery we had about ninety miners working the Coalbrookdale section, and we could not get a single man of them to work on the machines. We were to stand still?..... 32

---

(31) AJHR, 1889, I. 6, p. 38. 1901, C. 4, p. 176.

In 1900 the WCC mines at Denniston employed 16 Deputies, 41 miners, 22 men timbering, 14 blasters, 26 holing machine-men, 26 machine boys, 53 fillers, and 50 truckers. On the rope-roads they employed 35 men and boys, 13 blacksmiths, 27 engine-men, 5 carpenters, and 3 horse-attendants. Twenty-one men were engaged in tipping and lowering on the incline, 4 men loading goods, 2 weighmen, 16 stonemasons and labourers, 14 contractors lowering on the incline, and 4 of an office staff: total 394.

(32) AJHR, 1901, C. 4, p. 174.
The miners contended that the machines were uneconomic, unhealthy, and that they produced coal of an inferior quality. The machines were given the best places to work - if they had to work in places as low and narrow as those available to the men, they would not pay. 33 The exhaust air blew up the fine coal dust. This particularly concerned W. Davidson, a coalminer at Granity Creek;

...One of the boys employed is in the local band, and I have seen him take his handkerchief and wipe the coal-dust out of the mouth-piece of his instrument... 34

Furthermore, the machines produced a greater quantity of slack coal. As the shotfirers did not have to pay for their powder, like the coalminers, they used greater quantities, which broke up the coal. The day-labourers filled the coal tubs indiscriminately, and occasionally mistook black stone for coal. A coalminer "would be ashamed to put out such stuff". 35 John Foster, president of the union, alleged that such inferior coal simply would not sell if the market was as competitive as it used to be. 36

The WCC ignored the miners' protest and employed quartz miners to work the machines. They were given three months training, and found by the management to be "at least as

---

(33) AJHR, 1889, H. 11, p. 44. The union successfully fought an action against the WCC under the terms of their award because the company refused to cavil those sections of the mine worked by the machines. The company's defence was that it was impossible to cavil machines, and that the only places worked by manual labour were to be cavilled.

(34) AJHR, 1901, C. 4, p. 180.


(36) Ibid.
efficient in working this machine as men who have wrought long years in coal-mines and are prejudiced against" 37 them. The company, evidently found the coal-cutting machines satisfactory. The number of machines was doubled in both the Coalbrookdale and Millerton mines, and electricity was introduced to power them. 38

By 1900 the development works of the WCC were complete. The end of the era of development was marked by the death of Thomas Brown. In that year, the WCC mines had produced nearly 370,000 tons of coal, and the turnover for the year had exceeded a quarter of a million pounds. At the Annual General Meeting, the Chairman, H.J. Millar, informed the shareholders that "the demand for coal is greater this year than we have ever experienced in the history of the Company". 39 The success of the venture was finally established, twenty years after the first work was undertaken on a wind-swept plateau perched high above the Buller coastal plain.

(38) AJHR, 1899, C-3B, p. 5.
(39) Chairman's Report to the Eighteenth Annual General Meeting of shareholders, 14 Feb 1900.
CONCLUSION

In Buller in the late 1880's and early 1890's, it was possible to observe national issues played out in a local context with reference to one particular industry, the coal industry. The birth of union organization and class consciousness, the union collapse of 1890, and the gradual re-orientation of labour towards politics and compulsory arbitration were events as important on Denniston and in Westport as they were in Wellington and Dunedin.

John Lomas had been the catalyst for labour organization on Denniston, and although his wider vision was not fully understood by the rank and file, their support of him was not questioned. This was clearly demonstrated during the Maritime Strike, for as Lomas' support in Westport, Greymouth and further afield fell away, the resolve of the Denniston coalminers was strengthened. Theirs was perhaps an unrealistic assessment, based on the long string of labour successes that began in 1885, but they stood firm to the end behind their leader, who had advocated working class solidarity as the means to end industrial strife in New Zealand.

Although Lomas' vision of one grand union was not fully shared on Denniston, the coalminers were nonetheless more conscious of a hardening of attitudes than other workers. They fully supported Lomas when he spoke and acted on behalf of the 'working classes', for nowhere in New Zealand were class divisions better appreciated than on Denniston.
"Social osmosis" was an inapplicable concept: there was virtually no inter-occupational movement on Denniston. Those factors isolated by W.H. Oliver as capable of "the continual de-classing of the working class" were not at work here. Land was by no means a critical issue on Denniston or in Westport where agriculture had traditionally been backward in the face of a vigorous gold industry. Compulsory arbitration was only accepted by the Denniston coalminers from a position of extreme weakness, as a protection from renewed company aggression. It represented to them, insurance against another 1890, where the WCC directors had regained the initiative and flatly refused to negotiate. Furthermore, compulsory arbitration was not accepted without grumbling by the 'old hands'. Finally, coalminers, perhaps more than any other section of the labour movement in New Zealand in 1890, had a peculiar working-class culture. It was built on the shared background of British miners' organization, emigration, and struggle on Denniston. Education had no claim as "an elaborate opportunity system" on Denniston,

(2) Wise's, 1890-1, p. 142, 1894-5, p. 243, 1900, p. 258. Only three examples of upward social mobility are recorded in this source; two miners became storekeepers, and another, a boardinghouse-keeper.
(3) Oliver, op. cit.
(4) Ibid.
where all it could fit the young men for was the pit. The lack of inter-occupational movement has already been noted, as has the miners' ambivalent attitude towards education. It was seen as a means of self-improvement. This desire was necessarily divorced from the prospect of upward social mobility, except in as far as education and experience led to promotion within the coal industry. The social gradations within the coal mining community were, however, minimal.

Yet, how typical was the experience of the Denniston coalminers? The primitive conditions and the harsh local environment characteristic of the plateau provided classic pre-conditions to militancy. The differences between capital and labour were sharp and intense. For five years their one lifeline was controlled by 'the bosses'. The community in 1890 had a common history of struggle, which spanned generations and reached back into the old world.

The Denniston experience was, therefore, clearly unique. Few New Zealand workers experienced similar hardships and deprivations. For this reason perhaps, the Denniston miners were to play an important role in shaping the embryonic New Zealand labour movement. Their advocate, John Lomas, was capable of reaching beyond coalfield concerns. Denniston sharpened his awareness of the need for organization and provided a base from which he could advance the cause of unionism. Organization on a national scale would, in his view, not only strengthen the position of the
miners, but of all workers. And labour solidarity would eventually reduce industrial conflict. The crushing defeat of 1890 awakened John Lomas, as it did Millar, to the weakness of labour organization. There was clearly a need to win political support to advance the cause of labour in New Zealand. Lomas led the Denniston miners to support the Liberals, and ultimately to acceptance of compulsory arbitration. It was class consciousness, not the lack of it, that determined the coalminers support for the Liberal Party.
APPENDIX I

THE SHAREHOLDING OF THE WESTPORT COLLIERY COMPANY

It is evident from the Prospectus of the Westport Colliery Company that the majority of the leases were amalgamated to mount this one large venture. The capital of the Company was to be made up of 10,000 shares, but only 6,000 were to be issued initially. Five thousand were issued to the persons entitled to the "Coalbrookdale Co's" leases, and the remaining 1,000 to Fisher and Party. 1 The Westport Colliery Company was, therefore, based on the Coalbrookdale lease, which was noted in 1875 to be "licensed by three persons, who represent gentlemen in Dunedin". 2

An examination of the list of shareholders 3 reveals that John Corr was a shareholder. This would seem to indicate that the lease licensed to Overhagen also came under the general umbrella of the "Coalbrookdale Co's" leases.

J.B. Fisher represented Cable and Drummond to the Westport Colliery Reserve Commission in 1875. 4 As Fisher, H. Cable, D. Drummond, and J. Rochfort were all shareholders of the Westport Colliery Company, this is obviously the lease referred to as Fisher and Party.

(1) The Prospectus of the Westport Colliery Company Ltd.
(2) AJHR, 1876, A. 3, p. 118.
(4) AJHR, 1876, A. 3, p. 122.
Therefore, it seems certain that at least three major holdings were incorporated to make up the one large lease for the Westport Colliery Company.
APPENDIX II

THE DIRECTORS OF THE WESTPORT COAL COMPANY

It was possible to assemble detailed information relating to the more prominent directors of the WCC only, but from the material below it is evident that they had many other commercial ventures in common. Their combined business interests covered the spectrum of New Zealand commerce in the 1880's. These marketing connections and their political involvement ensured that their assessment of the worth of a coal industry in the Buller would be well-founded.

A.J. Burns (1830-1901)

b. Scotland
Mercantile-marine
to N.Z. in 1848

Shares: 653
Business interests:
Land (Grants Braes)
Mosgiel Woollen Co.

Marketing connections:
Land (rise of the frozen meat industry)
Factory industry.

Political involvement:
Provincial Council
1855-9 Central
1863-70 Taieri

M.H.R.
1865-6 Bruce
1866-70 Caversham
1876-8 Roslyn.

R. Gillies (1835-1886)

b. England
University education
to N.Z. in 1851

Shares: 2535
Business interests:
Land (Riversdale)
Provincial Surveyor
E.B. Cargill (1823-1903)
b. Scotland
Mercantile-marine to N.Z. in 185

1861 C.H. Street, Land and Estate Agents.
1884 formed Perpetual Trustees, Estate and Agency Co.

Marketing connections:
Land
Dunedin Waterworks.

Political Involvement:
M.H.R.
1884 Bruce.

E.B. Cargill (1823-1903)

Shares: 534
Business Interests:
1858 Jones, Cargill and Co., merchants, shipping agents and shipowners.
1881 formed British and N.Z. Mortgage and Agency Co., (invested heavily in station land in Otago)
Founder of Colonial Bank.

Marketing connections:
Land
Invested in meat-preserving works at Green Island
N.Z. Refrigerating Co.
Factory industry (director Mosgiel Woollen Co.)
Union Steam Ship Co.

Political Involvement:
Provincial Council
1862-7
1871-3
M.H.R.
1862-5 Bruce.
W.J.M. Larnach (1838-1898)
b. New South Wales Banking to N.Z. in 1867 Shares: 1339

Business interests:
- Bank of New South Wales
- 1875 Guthrie and Larnach, hardware merchants.
- 1887 Colonial Bank.
- National Insurance Co.

Marketing connections:
- Kaitangata Railway and Coal Co.

Political involvement:
- M.H.R.
  - 1875-8 Dunedin City
  - 1877-8 Colonial Treasurer, Minister of Public Works.
  - 1882 Peninsula
  - 1884-7 Minister for Mines and Marine
  - 1894 Tuapeka.

H.J. Millar (1830-1918)
b. England University education to N.Z. in 1860 Shares: 1643

Business interests:
- Land (Fernbrook).

Marketing connections:
- Land.

Political involvement:
- Local body politics in Oamaru
  - Legislative Council 1865.

R. Oliver (1830-1918)
b. England to N.Z. in 1860's returned 1901 Shares: 1074

Business interests:
- Land
  - Port Chalmers railway
B. Hallenstein (1835-1905)
b. Germany to N.Z. in 1863

Shares: 735
Business interests:
Founded N.Z. Hardware Co.
Marketing connections:
Land
Railways.
Political involvement:
Provincial Council 1873-5 Mt Ida
M.H.R.
1878-81 Dunedin City
Legislative Council 1887.

W.D. Stewart (1842-1898)
b. Scotland Law to N.Z. in 1862.

Shares: 707
Business interests:
Law, Richmond and Gillies.
Colonial Bank.
Mosgiel Woollen Co.
Perpetual Trustees.
Marketing connections:
Land
Factory industry.
Political Involvement:
M.H.R.
1879-90
Legislative Council 1891.
APPENDIX III

INFANT MORTALITY ON DENNISTON

Although certain trends emerge clearly, it is impossible to compile an exact chart of infant mortality on Denniston. The Death Registers covering the period 1880-1910 have survived, but the Birth Registers have not, so I was unable to index the number of infant deaths to the number of live births to compute an infant death rate. However, certain inferences can be drawn from the cause of death, which I have roughly compared to a national average drawn from Infant and Foetal Loss in New Zealand by R.J. Rose.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause of Death</th>
<th>N.Z. 1902-6</th>
<th>Denniston 1880-1910</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Epidemic diseases (including influenza, measles, diptheria, and typhoid)</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuberculosis</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infantile convulsions</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory diseases</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gastric and intestinal diseases</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congenital malformations</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diseases peculiar to early infancy (including immaturity, asphyxia, infection)</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>4.5 +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+On Denniston these included malnutrition, syphilis, and blood poisoning.
Inaccurate classification has possibly caused some distortion of these figures. Doctors in the 1880's often used very different medical terms to those in vogue today. Occasionally they misread the symptoms altogether, as in the case of death due to infantile convulsions, which were thought then, to be caused by teething trouble. For these reasons, exact classification was very difficult.

John Lomas returned from Australia late in 1890 or early in 1891. 1 The union had disintegrated in his absence, and he arranged to return to England. However, as the result of an interview with R.J. Seddon, the Minister of Mines in Ballance's Liberal Government, he accepted a position as clerk with the new Bureau of Industries. 2 This meeting may have taken place in March, when Seddon visited Westport and received "several deputations". 3 In June, 1891 W.P. Reeves assumed responsibility for the Bureau, which soon changed its name to the Department of Labour. 4

Lomas became one of the Department's first inspectors of factories. In April, 1893 he was transferred to Christchurch to take charge of the branch office. Lomas may have been a widower for a large part of his time on Denniston as he married again while he was in Christchurch in 1902. 5 Three years later he took charge of the Department of Labour's Dunedin office.

In 1906 he was appointed Deputy Chief Inspector of Factories and returned to Wellington. He renewed his association with the Trinity Methodist Church in Newtown. 6

---

(2) Department of Labour, Immigration Division, Library.
(3) GHA 20 Mar 1891.
(4) Roth, p. 19.
(5) Death Certificate, Christchurch Death Register, 16 Nov 1933.
(6) Department of Labour, Library.
His immediate superior died the following year and Lomas was promoted to the position of Chief Inspection of Factories and Assistant Secretary of Labour. He became Secretary of Labour when Edward Tregear retired in 1911. His salary was £600, a vast improvement on his wage as check-weighman while on Denniston. He held this position until he retired on superannuation in 1913, at the age of sixty-five. He then returned with his wife to Christchurch, where he lived until his death in 1933.  

(7) Death Certificate, 16 Nov 1933.
NOTES ON SOURCES

The diagram below succinctly summarizes the difficulties in compiling material for this thesis. The sources were scattered, and no definitive study of a remotely similar nature existed. Although it could be expected that newspapers would form the body of the material used, local newspapers have survived for only six of the twenty years researched. Unfortunately, the Westport Times was only a bi-weekly.

1880 WT 1885 1890 only random issues
1890 WS WES BM 1900

It was therefore necessary to supplement this source from the files of other newspapers. The Grey River Argus and Lyttelton Times were especially helpful as they occasionally featured news articles from the Buller district. Reliance upon newspapers, however, has obvious limitations. Editors often allow themselves a great deal of license in the interpretation of local events and this bias had to be considered, particularly where newspapers formed the only record.

The second major source of information was the records of the Westport Coal Company held in the Hocken Library. Although a wide variety of material has survived, the Minute Books are tantalizingly incomplete as the Correspondence File has been lost. However, a great deal of detail not officially recorded or in the newspapers
was available in these company records and they proved invaluable in piecing together the economic side of the story.

The statistical framework for the coal industry in the Buller came from the *Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives*. The annual reports of the Mines Department often included local detail also, in the form of a personal comment by the Inspector of Mines. Coal Commissions were held in 1882, 1889, and 1901, to compile material on various aspects of the coal industry in the Buller, and they all contain valuable detail. Material was drawn as well from the annual reports of the Department of Labour.

Local records were less abundant. The Borough and County minutes were incomplete, but a mine of statistical information was discovered in the Denniston Death Registers which were available for the period 1878 to 1910.

Secondary sources were also sparse. However, an important and invaluable starting point was found in the two unpublished theses: 'Workers in Grey District Politics, 1865-1913' by P.J. O'Farrell, and 'Historical Geography of Westland before 1914' by M. McCaskill. Reference to the experience of coalfields elsewhere especially in Australia and Great Britain afforded useful comparative insights.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. PRIMARY SOURCES:

1. Official Publications
   Appendix to the Journal of the House of Representatives, 1870-1901.
   The Handbook of New Zealand Mines
   Wellington, Government Printer, 1887.
   New Zealand Census 1880-1900.
   The New Zealand Mining Handbook
   New Zealand Parliamentary Debates.

2. Local Records
   Register of Deaths for Denniston, Westport Court House.
   Buller County Council Minute Books, 1883-1889.
   Westport Borough Council Minute Books.

3. Manuscript
   Westport Coal Company, Ltd., records:
      Minute Books, 1878-1889
      Reports of Directors to the annual general meetings of shareholders; 1886, 1890-3, 1895-1900
      Branch Advertisement Scrapbook
      Directors' Minute Book, 1882-1889 (local board, Melbourne)
      Circular Book
      Abstract of Deeds and Agreements
      The Prospectus of the Westport Coal Co. Ltd.
      The Westport (or Buller) Coal-field of New Zealand
      Miscellaneous papers.

4. Newspapers
   Buller Miner
   Colliery Guardian
   Grey River Argus
Lyttelton Times
Newcastle Morning Herald
Westport Evening Star
Westport News
Westport Star
Westport Times
Westport Times and Star.

A note on the newspapers:
The Westport Times was established in 1866 by John Tyrell. It was published first as a bi-weekly, and then as a tri-weekly. In 1872 the Westport Evening Star was established and published daily. The two newspapers were combined in 1890 and published as the Westport Times and Star. The Buller Miner was founded in 1881, and edited by the manager and owner, J.L. Munson. The paper was a weekly and was published each Friday. The Westport News was established in 1873 and issued as a tri-weekly. In 1889 the paper was taken over and issued as a morning daily.

(Source: The Cyclopedia of New Zealand, Vol. 5, pp. 175-6).

B. SECONDARY SOURCES:

1. Unpublished Material
   (a) Theses:
Crowley, D.W. 'The Labour Movement in New Zealand, 1894-1913'

Doel, O. 'The Coal-Mining Industry in the Westport District'

McCaskill, M. 'Historical Geography of Westland before 1914'
Merrett, I.A.  'A Reappraisal of the 1890 Maritime Strike in New Zealand'

Nimmo, A.M.  'Coal Mining in Otago'

O'Farrell, P.J.  'Workers in Grey District Politics, 1865-1913'

Salmond, J.D.  'History of the New Zealand Labour Movement, from Settlement to the Conciliation and Arbitration Act'

Spencer, W.E.  'A History of the Buller District'

(b) Unpublished typescript:
Moloney, D.  Collection of Newspaper Cuttings, Volumes 1-3.

Munro, W.A.  'The Story of Denniston'
Denniston D.H.S. project

Openshaw, A.  'A Brief History of the Denniston Inclines'.

Ward, J.  'Recollections of a lifetime on the West Coast of the South Island'.

2. Published
(a) Local
Adams, C.  The Hill
MacDonald, B.  
Westport - Struggle for Survival  
Nelson, Westport Borough Council,  

Matthews, E.  
Yesterday's in Golden Buller  
Christchurch, Pegasus Press,  
1957.

Meyer, R.J.  
Coaling from the Clouds  
Wellington, New Zealand Railway  
and Locomotive Society, Inc.,  
1971.

(b) General

Arbon, A.L. and Parsons, R.H.  
A history of the Union Steam Ship  
Co. of New Zealand 1875-1971  

Arnot, R.P.  
The Miners - A history of the  
Miners' Federation of Great  
Britain 1889-1910  
London, George Allen and Unwin  
Ltd., 1949.

Condliffe, J.B.  
New Zealand in the Making: a  
study of economic and social  
development;  
London, George Allen and Unwin  
Ltd., 1963.

Cumberland, K.B.  
Atlas of Geography  
Christchurch, Whitcombe and  
Tombs, Ltd., 1956.

The Cyclopedia of New Zealand  
Vol. 5, Nelson, Marlborough and  
Westland  
Christchurch, Cyclopedia Co. Ltd.,  
1906.
Dennis, N.  
Coal is our Life: an analysis of a Yorkshire mining community  

Dixson, M.  
The Real Matilda - Woman and Identity in Australia 1788 to 1975  

Farquhar, I.J.  
Union Fleet 1875-1975  

Fynes, R.  
The Miners of Northumberland and Durham: a history of their social and political progress  
Sunderland, T., Summerhill, 1923.

Gollan, R.  
The Coalminers of New South Wales - A history of the Union, 1860-1960  

Hartz, L.  
The Founding of New Societies  

Jones, P.N.  
Colliery Settlement in the South Wales Coalfield  
Hull, University of Hull, 1969.

Knowles, K.C.  
Strikes - A study in Industrial Conflict (with special reference to the British experience between 1911 and 1947)  

Munz, P., (ed).  
The Feel of Truth: essays in New Zealand and Pacific history presented to F.L.W. Wood and J.C. Beaglehole on the occasion of their retirement  
Wellington, Reed for the Victoria University, 1969.
Pitt, D.C. (ed). Social Class in New Zealand

Rose, R.J. Infant and Foetal Loss in New Zealand
Wellington, Department of Health, 1964.

Roth, H.O. Trade Unions in New Zealand: past and present

Salmond, J.D. New Zealand labour's pioneering days: the history of the labour movement in New Zealand from 1840 to 1894


Simkin, C.G.F. The Instability of a Dependent Economy: economic fluctuations in New Zealand 1840-1914

Simpson, H.M. The Women of New Zealand
Wellington, Department of Internal Affairs, 1940.

Sinclair, K. A history of New Zealand


-  Who's Who in New Zealand and the Western Pacific 1908.
