

generally, you are only dealing with large vested interests of licensed victuallers, and you have even gone so far as to make an appeal to the Grondwet, which protects the liberty and possession of every individual. My view of the matter is this, that if the general interests of the gold industry and the working power of the kaffir is sapped by liquor and injured, the lesser interest must give way to the greater. It is an indisputable fact that the liquor traffic saps the working power of the kaffir, so that it is impossible to keep control over them. You want to protect the large dealers in liquor, and you want to put the blame on the small retailers, but it was not these who imported the bad liquor, and the people whose chairman you are should watch the importation of bad liquor.

Mr. Hay.

In your statement you refer to what took place in Pretoria in May, 1896. You wrote that from memory?—Will you kindly refer me to the point to which you allude. “I had the honour of appearing before the Commission in May, 1896, and Mr. James Hay, the Chamber of Mines, and I, offered similar proposals, especially with reference to the kaffir liquor traffic. Mr. Hay pointed out the kaffir should have his drink, but it ought to be only meted out to him in State defined and stamped measures.” I don't think that is correct. I will state what took place. When I appeared before the Commission I pointed out that the law, as it stood, was good if it were carried out. The native was prohibited from getting drink, except with the permission of his master. Therefore, if the master carried out his duty, he had the regulation of the law in his hands. I then pointed out that in the law there was a certain anomaly; it provided that a native could not be proceeded against if he had in his possession half a bottle of brandy, and the consequence was this, that although natives were found in possession of liquor they could not be prosecuted as long as they had not more than half a bottle, and by that means liquor was taken into the compounds in considerable quantities, and evil arose. I suggested that that should be expunged from the law. Mr. Van den Berg, who presided over that Commission, asked me whether I was in favour of total prohibition to natives, and I said yes, if it could be properly carried out. Is not that what took place?—It is only a question of memory. I am certainly under the impression that you advocated what I said in my declaration.

That is what took place.

MR. W. R. BROWN, representing Barberton Chamber of Mines, was called and duly sworn. He said:

I have little to add, gentlemen, to what has been said by the Johannesburg witnesses, as they have dealt with the various matters very thoroughly, and I, as representing the De Kaap district, fully endorse what they have said. Dynamite at Barberton costs £5 to £5 1s. per case, and the price has been recently raised 5s. per case, for which action we have received no satisfactory explanation. Mine managers in my district were almost unanimous in stating that the quality of dynamite is not equal to that of the early days, and consequently, in our hard ground, many of the mines use blasting gelatine, which costs, delivered on the mines, £6 5s. Being so near to the port we do not understand why we are charged a higher price for dynamite than is paid by mines on the Rand. Miners complain bitterly of the manner in which dynamite is packed. Many cartridges arrive so much out of shape that the miners are compelled to cut the cartridges down the centre in order to get them into drill holes, and this practice has resulted in many accidents. On the Sheba there was an

accident two months ago. Dynamite can be laid down in Barberton *via* Delagoa at <sup>Pe</sup> 53s. per case. The average cost of driving and sinking on our mines amounts to 18 per cent. of the total cost. This question of coal is becoming a serious matter with us. In many instances mines would put up milling plant, provided coal could be laid down at a reasonable rate. At present the price is too high for us to use it for <sup>Pr</sup> driving our batteries. It costs about 30s. per ton. I may mention these mines are highly prolific. We are desirous of sending our concentrates to Johannesburg for <sup>Ba</sup> treatment, but the railway rate of £4 per ton is prohibitive. We prefer to ship them *via* Delagoa Bay to Europe for treatment. The next question I would refer to is the railage to the port. I do not wish to bring any statistics, but I will give one instance. A small parcel of wagon wood costs in Cape Town £5 13s. 9d., and the railage from Cape Town to Barberton was £10 2s. Another instance is in connection with the Barberton Waterworks. I have not the exact figures, but I have them approximately. The railage, cartage in England, and ocean freight came, roughly, to £500, and from Delagoa Bay to Barberton it cost about £2,000—and that for public works. We have not been able to get any remission of railage rates. There are bitter <sup>Ma</sup> complaints from merchants with regard to claims for loss in shortage. Proof can be <sup>t</sup> produced, if necessary, that claims for damage and shortage, even when certified by the <sup>li</sup> *chef* at Barberton, are seldom, if ever, recognised by the head office in Pretoria. It is a most difficult thing to get these matters settled with the railway company, and people, unless the sum is considerable, prefer to lose their money rather than go to Pretoria to sue the company. We feel it would be only fair and right if we were allowed to sue the railway company up to a certain amount in our local Court. It comes very hard on people to have to lose their goods and to have to incur the expense of coming to Pretoria to sue the railway company. Another point is the right of the railway company to impose fines. There is one instance I will name. A parcel of mealie meal of 50 bags arrived from Delagoa Bay about a fortnight ago; the invoice was lost through no fault of the consignor or consignee; it was lost in the post, and before another invoice could be obtained, a charge of £8 10s. for storage was imposed on the consignee, although the meal had been stored in a warehouse he had rented from the railway company at the railway station. The question of native labour is <sup>Nat</sup> becoming a very serious matter with us in Barberton. Up to quite recently we never <sup>di</sup> had any difficulty in getting the number of natives required. It is a difficult <sup>B</sup> thing to talk about, because the best heads in Johannesburg have apparently not been able to deal with the matter satisfactorily. I do not think we would have any difficulty in getting the small number of natives we require if it were not for the fact that natives who are travelling, and intend to come to work in Barberton, are taken away against their will by touts to Johannesburg. We would like to have some method adopted by the Government to put an end to this interference with natives. I do not know that I am in order in dealing with the matter of Government surveys. <sup>Gov</sup> <sup>ve</sup>

*Chairman.*

Yes; if you have anything to say we will be pleased to hear it.—It is merely this, that in a district like ours, where claims are taken up, as a rule, by poor prospectors, the new law with regard to Government survey presses very hard on them. I can quite understand it is not the same in Johannesburg; the conditions are quite different. In our district it has absolutely put a stop to prospecting. There is a small matter of purely local interest I would like to mention, and that is the question of facilities for inter-communication between the different mines. As the Chairman is aware, ours is a very rough country, and we are very badly off for roads. That has <sup>Bar</sup> been brought before the Government by memorial. If it is within the province of

this Commission we would be very glad if some recommendation were made that the Government should assist us in this matter; more especially a road that would connect Barberton with the goldfields, which would be extended later on to Swaziland, and tap the tin mines in that district.

I want to examine you with regard to the dynamite monopoly, more especially as it affects Barberton. You not only complain, I understand, of the expense, but also of the quality?—Yes, more especially because of the bad state in which the dynamite reaches us.

You say you can lay down dynamite at Barberton for 53s.?—Yes, we import it by Delagoa Bay.

Then with reference to coal. Can you say what you would consider a reasonable price to pay on coal from Brugspruit to Barberton?—Well, my idea of a reasonable price for that would be about  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per mile.

You would be satisfied with that?—Well, yes.

Now with reference to the other complaints about the fines imposed by the railway, and invoices being lost. Can you not hand in some documents bearing on this matter?—Yes, I have a letter here. I have a letter from the person who made the complaint in question.

Will you be able to let the Commission have the documents in this case; could you send them in to the secretary?—Yes. I can let you have the documents, as well as sworn declarations. This is only one case. There are many others of a similar nature.

With respect to native labour. I understand that the only complaint is that while boys are coming to Barberton they are caught by Johannesburg touts?—Yes, that is the only complaint we have in the matter of native labour. I can give instances. I have boys on two of the mines with which I am connected, who have walked to Swaziland, knowing that if they went by Komatie Poort they would be caught by the touts.

Now, regarding the survey of claims. This matter does not, I think, lie within the scope of this enquiry, but as it is in the interests of the industry, I would advise you to bring the matter to the notice of the Barberton Chamber of Mines, who could work through the Minister of Mines to the Government.—Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I brought it to the notice of the Commission in the interests of the industry.

Mr. Joubert.

I only wish to ask if the coal from Belfast is worse for mining purposes than that from Brugspruit?—Oh, no! I only gave Brugspruit as an instance, because of the distance.

What I want to know is if there is any difference in the quality of the coal?—That I cannot say; I have not gone into the matter.

Mr. Schmitz-Dumont.

Do you know whether the managers are satisfied with the blasting of the blasting gelatine?—Yes, they are, so far as I know, satisfied with it. They only complain that they have to use it in place of dynamite. The blasting gelatine certainly does heavier work than dynamite, but if the dynamite was as good as it was in the old days, they would not need the gelatine.

Mr. Hugo.

With respect to the question of white labour, is there any difficulty in your district?—We have no difficulty in that matter. We get as many good men as we require at fair wages.