

25. Do you think it more so than working on a farm?—It may be more so than that. I think that working on the surface and on a farm is very healthy as an occupation; but coal-mining is not more injurious to health, I think, than any other class of mining.

26. What about the risk that men run in coal-mining?—There is more risk.

27. Do you consider that time underground should be made as short as possible on account of the risk?—I do not think it would make the slightest difference in the risk run. That is really a question of looking after the mines.

28. We know that they are always supposed to be well looked after, but accidents do happen?—Some miners are very careless themselves.

29. Could we not reduce the risk by reducing the time worked by the men in mines?—I do not think that would make the slightest difference.

30. You advise the Government in connection with the State coal-mines?—Yes.

31. Do you think that if the Government adopt the eight hours from bank to bank it will cost them from 7 per cent. to 15 per cent. more if they do not allow the men their crib-time?—I think it will cost them 7 per cent. more, the same as any other owners.

32. How do you work that out?—It would be half an hour a day less.

33. It would only take fifteen minutes for crib?—I am afraid that if you had much to do in coal-mines you would know that it takes more than fifteen minutes.

34. I know a good deal, and I have evidence from miners all over the colony?—I have been connected with mining for forty years, and I have never known miners take less than half an hour.

35. Is it not a fact that most of the coal got in the colony now is won on piecework?—Some of it is got on piece, and some on wages; a great deal is on piece. A lot of the truckers and banks-men and others are on wages.

36. Are you familiar with the awards of the Arbitration Court?—I know what the award is governing the working of the mine that I am connected with.

37. But generally?—I do not know that I am particularly well acquainted with every award going. There are so many.

38. Supposing that the getting and the trucking is all done by piecework?—It is not done on piecework. We pay wages.

39. But I understand that yours is a very small mine?—The wages amount to £20,000 a year.

40. Take Denniston, for instance, or Millerton, or Blackball?—I believe they are trucking on contract there.

41. Would you not have considerable difficulty in proving, when all this is done on piecework, and if the men are prepared to forego their crib-time and leave it to the Arbitration Court to decide whether they should be paid the same or not—would you not find considerable difficulty in proving that coal would cost 7 per cent. more?—I do not think it would be advantageous for any employer to have a man work for eight hours without getting a meal.

42. But it is proposed the men should get a meal?—They could not take their meal and work at the same time.

43. But suppose they are firing shots; there is certain time lost in which they could have their crib?—You cannot always regulate firing shots to any particular time.

44. Suppose you tried?—You may do so, but you may lose more than you gain by it.

45. *Hon. Mr. McGowan.* Have you heard any complaints from the miners in the North with regard to the ordinary working-hours in quartz mines?—I have not heard any word, and I do not think that if you made it five hours a day the miners would make a complaint.

46. Have you heard any complaints from the coal-miners in the North in regard to the hours of working?—No. They will not complain if you make it five hours.

47. *Mr. Witheford.* With regard to changing, is it not usual for miners to go down and change at the face, one shift being there before the other shift leave off work, particularly on surface workings?—They are supposed so do so, but they do not carry it out. They generally leave the face when the time is up, whether the others are there or not.

48. Is it not customary for a new shift to go down to the face, take their instructions, and see what the other men are doing, being there five or ten minutes before the time?—No, it is not. It used to be, but it has been done away with.

49. With regard to African mining, is not the average mining there done at a much greater depth than in New Zealand?—I cannot speak as to the depth of the mines in Africa. In some of the mines here the depth is pretty great; it is 500 ft. at Waihi.

50. *Mr. J. Allen.* With regard to clause 2 of the Mining Bill—"The word 'miner' where used in section nine of 'The Mining Act Amendment Act, 1902,' shall mean and include every workman employed underground in a mine"—do you mind telling us what would be the meaning of this alteration in the definition of the word "miner," in reference to both coal and gold mines? Are there others than actual coal-cutters and quartz-winners employed?—In both quartz and coal mines there are plenty of men employed in trucking—men who may go straight to it without having been in a mine before in their lives, and who would not be of any use as far as actually going to the face was concerned. You could not exactly call a man employed on trucking a miner in the ordinary sense of the word. I do not know what you might mean by saying every man is a miner who is employed in a mine.

51. Are not pumps, machinery, and all that kind of thing often used underground in both classes of mine?—Often.

52. Are men who are not miners in any sense of the word often sent down to look after these pumps and other machinery in these mines?—Men accustomed to machinery are sent down to look after it.

53. This Bill would include them all under the definition of "miner"?—Yes.

54. Have you seen clause 9 of the Act of 1902? What would be the meaning of that if they were all included under the definition of "miner"?—There are times when a man whom you have to work eight hours a day is not working half his time—a man doing repairs, laying rods, repairing machinery, and everything of that sort.

55. If this clause were passed would it not mean that an underviewer, a fireman, or a deputy, or anybody who went down to look after pumps, or a trucker, a carpenter, or any hands other