

95. I do not think he would get it?—He would try for it. It could scarcely be refused.

96. You are of opinion that it is better to leave the question of hours to be decided by the Court, as at present, than to alter the hours by this Bill?—I think it better. I do.

97. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] The Minister of Mines asked you as to the qualification and method of administration of the Inspector of Mines. What was your reply?—That we could not have a better Inspector.

98. Are you in the habit of flattering the Inspector now and again?—I do not flatter any man.

99. Supposing your managing director went to the president of the Denniston Union and asked him how you managed the mine, would that be placing you in a pleasant position?—I do not think my directors would do a thing like that.

100. Then do you think it right for the Minister of Mines to ask you that question?—I see no harm in it. I did not know it was the Minister who was asking me the question.

101. I will examine you on the Gold-mines Bill first, because you pretend to know a great deal about it?—No; I know nothing about it.

102. What do you know about quartz mining?—Nothing.

103. Have you ever worked in a quartz mine?—Never.

104. Have you ever been down a quartz mine?—No; I never saw a gold-mine in my life.

105. But you come here and give evidence with regard to it?—If I am asked to give evidence I can do it to the best of my ability.

106. Do you consider yourself qualified to give evidence about a quartz mine when you never saw one?—I leave that to you, gentlemen. I am capable of saying that men engaged with pumps, or attending to horses down a pit, or to the machinery in a mine, should not be classed as miners. That is all I have to say about it.

107. You say that you have thirty-six coal-hewers. Does that mean the hewers employed by the Westport Coal Company?—No; the number at Millerton.

108. Am I to understand that you are here to represent the Westport Coal Company as far as their works are concerned?—Yes, I suppose so.

109. Are you an expert coal-miner?—Do you mean as regards getting coal?

110. I mean in any way you like to take it—as the term is generally understood?—I am a colliery-manager by profession, having served my time to it.

111. Have you ever worked in a coal-mine?—Yes.

112. What doing?—Anything.

113. What do you call "anything"?—All things.

114. Were you ever hewing coal?—No, never.

115. Have you ever passed the examination that is necessary in order to get a mine-manager's certificate in this colony?—Not in this colony, but I did at Home.

116. You are practically not a mine-manager in this colony at all?—I am a mining manager.

117. You are really the surface manager?—I look after the general work. There is a certificated manager under me, to comply with the Act.

118. As a matter of fact, there is another coal-mine manager at Millerton besides you?—Yes, he is the certificated manager.

119. Is he the man who is liable to the law in the event of accident?—Yes, he is liable to the law.

120. Is it a fact that you are not the mine-manager at Millerton at all?—I am the mine-manager.

121. But not the mine-manager according to law?—Not the certificated mining manager.

122. I understand your position thoroughly, but so that the House of Representatives shall not be misled, I want your position defined clearly. If there was an accident in that mine you would not be responsible?—No, I am not responsible as regards the connection between the Government and the mine-manager.

123. You are not responsible to the law?—I do not think so.

124. Consequently you are not responsible for the men's health?—Oh, yes; I feel myself bound to be responsible for that.

125. It is your legal position I want to get at?—I am there to see that the man who is responsible carries out the Act in its entirety.

126. If the men have a complaint to make about the ventilation of the mine, according to law, or according to the mining regulations, whom do they make it to?—Very likely they would make it to me or to the mine-manager.

127. Whom would the men be compelled to make their complaint to, according to the law and the mining regulations?—The mine-manager.

128. And that is not yourself?—Just so.

129. Coming to another point: You told us that if this small concession was granted your company could not compete with Newcastle coal. Do you remember that?—I said that it was well to look ahead against outside markets, for fear that we should be having a large influx of Newcastle, if our mines were reducing their output.

130. Do you know the quantity of Newcastle coal coming to this colony?—Yes, I think I can tell you pretty nearly.

131. What do you think it is?—A little under 300,000 tons a year.

132. Have you any authority for making that statement?—Yes; about 274,000 tons, I think, was exported from Newcastle to New Zealand last year.

133. Suppose it could be proved to be about 124,000?—It would not affect me at all. I read the figures in the New South Wales Mining Statistics.

134. Do you know what quantity of Newcastle coal has been imported into New Zealand annually for, say the last fifteen years?—I do not know.