

4. *Mr J Duncan.*] Did I understand you to say that 30 per cent. of your men would rather stay at home on Saturday afternoon?—No; 50 per cent.

5. Then you are favourable to the half-holiday?—No. I say we should either have to work the full shift or not at all.

6. But 50 per cent. of the men themselves would be favourable to the half-holiday?—No. They are paid so-much per ton: the men want to work the full Saturday

7 If the half-holiday were brought into force, would they agree to go to work on the Saturday?—No. I say 50 per cent. of them would not go to work. That is our experience.

8. *Mr Seddon.*] Have your men expressed any wish for the half-holiday?—No. The only thing they have asked for is the pay Saturday

9 *Mr Colvin.*] Your men get paid at so-much per ton?—Yes.

10. How many per cent. of them are paid by day-wages?—I suppose nearly half

11. I suppose those men who are paid so-much per day would be anxious to get the Saturday half-holiday if they got paid for it?—Certainly, if paid a full shift for four hours' work. They would jump at it.

12. Men working in a quartz-mine and getting so-much per day would be glad to get the half-holiday if paid for the full day?—Yes, but that would materially increase the cost of mining. In our case it would mean a very large increase in the wages. We average five days a week all told, and it would mean a shilling a day rise for them.

13. I take it that that is what is intended by the Bill?—I did not take it in that way

14. *Hon. Mr R McKenzie*] You pay so-much per hour?—So-much per shift.

15. *The Chairman.*] And a short shift is as good as a long one?—Yes. If taken in the way suggested it would mean giving the men a shilling a day more. It would work out very badly, in this way: the miners working on tonnage rates would get nothing by the holiday, but the truckers and day-wages men generally would gain. The result would be that the miners would turn round and ask for an increase proportionately, which if granted would mean a large increase in the cost of mining.

16. *Hon. Mr R McKenzie.*] Do you do your trucking on day-wages?—Yes.

17 If this Bill became law would you work that shift at all?—Not if I had to pay a full shift for it.

18. You would keep your mine idle?—Yes.

19. Consequently the truckers and others would get no wages at all for that day?—That is so.

20. If the miners did not work they would keep all the other men idle?—Just so. The men would not go to work. We have proof of it by experience now

21 With regard to your reference to the interference of the shipping I suppose that would have a very serious effect sometimes?—Yes. I will just tell you what happened last week. We were 200 tons short for the "Ngahere," and she had to wait a tide in order to get that 200 tons. The consequence was that she could not get away on the Wednesday, and did not sail until the following Monday, whereas if that 200 tons had been loaded she would have got away on the first tide.

22. Have you any arrangement with the Union Steamship Company as to demurrage or delays?—All that sort of thing is arranged with the head office of our company.

23. *Hon. Mr Guinness*] What is the proportion of men employed in coal-cutting in relation to the rest of the men, including truckers?—I think they are about half-and-half, as near as I can remember

24. You have had experience in New South Wales?—Yes.

25. What is the practice there?—They have the full pay Saturday off.

26. No half-holiday?—No; not in my time.

27 *The Chairman.*] How long is that ago?—About fifteen years. I was over there about four years ago, and they had no half-holiday then.

GEORGE GEITH TOWNSEND examined. (No. 4.)

1 *The Chairman.*] What is your position?—Manager of the Paparoa Coal-mining Company

2. You desire to make a statement with regard to the Half-holiday for Miners Bill?—Yes. I have not much to add to what has been said by the other witnesses, and I think they have covered the ground very fully. As far as my knowledge goes in regard to the agreements made with the miners, I know of no case where they have asked for the alteration proposed by the Bill. We have, unfortunately, had experience of troubles at our mine, but this particular matter has not been in dispute at any time. The men not having asked for the present system to be changed, it shows, I take it, that they are quite satisfied with the present arrangement. The wages are usually paid on the Friday, and the following day is an idle day. It would result in much inconvenience if it were decided to work only a few hours every Saturday, and in loss to the men themselves. It is also recognized that pay Saturday affords an excellent opportunity for the carrying-out of necessary repair-work which cannot be done when the mine is in full operation. If this work were not done on the Saturday it would have to be done on the Monday, but until the mine was ready the men would be idle, so that their earning-power would be decreased.

3. *Hon. Mr R McKenzie.*] I suppose the full holiday on pay Saturday suits the management as well as the men?—Yes, it suits all of us.

4. *Mr E H Taylor*] Do you think the rearrangement of the hours in order to provide for the half-day would materially affect the men?—I think it would decrease their earning-power. As pointed out by previous witnesses, I think the miners would not agree to work for a half-shift.

5. *Hon. Mr. Guinness*] You are simply the legal manager of the company?—Manager of the head office here.

6 You know nothing about the practical working of the mine?—No, I am not a practical man.