

5. That would imply that there would still be a shift at work?—Yes. The strong point is this: The miners do not want it themselves. I am speaking for the Ohinemuri district. I have not heard a word of complaint against the present system.

6. In speaking of the unions, I have an expression here from one of the most important unions in the Karangahake district—the Thames Miners' Union. They consider it favourably so far as it goes, and I am instructed to support this Bill if it meets with my approval. So you see, taking the large unions, which include the Karangahake mines, they do not see the objections that you see?—I think most of the Thames miners only work one shift, and none are in a dividend-paying stage. The difficulty is with the stamps and batteries.

7 I simply wish to state that the union has considered the Bill, and the expression is that, after consideration, it was approved of?—Do they understand that of course they would not be paid for the time given to them?

8. It would simply mean a readjustment of hours—they would work the same number of hours?—I do not see how they could do it. Nearly all the Thames mines are one-shift mines. The Karangahake Union at present is in a chaotic state. I know, because I endeavoured to get an expression of opinion from the officers.

9. *Mr Anderson.*] Would this half-holiday mean the closing-down of your mine?—Mr Rhodes mentions the closing-down of the mine.

10. That would mean that the men would lose twelve hours' work?—Yes. We should not be able to start again at 6 o'clock. It would not pay the batteries to work for three hours and a half.

11 It would mean that all mines which run three shifts would lose three hours' work a week if this Bill were passed?—Yes. At all events, it would certainly mean the closing-down of the batteries from 10 o'clock.

12. You cannot speak for the miners?—No.

13. *Mr Seddon.*] You spoke about a mine troubled with water flowing into it?—Yes.

14. You know something about the Ross Flat would that be affected?—Yes, certainly.

15. Could not men be kept on under the Bill?—Yes, there is provision made for urgent work. But take the sinking of the shaft at the Waihi Grand Junction Mine: They were crushing ore there that did not pay. This year there is a small margin over cost, but if you increase the cost of pumping by compelling them to pay extra wages the mine will be hard-hit. There are three factors that are causing anxiety at present—the Silting Commission's report, the provision in the Mining Act for an extra 3d. in the ounce of gold, and there is this Half-holiday Bill. These proposals are hitting mining all the time.

16. The engines in the Ross Flat Mine would have to be kept going, and the men kept on would have to be paid for extra time?—Yes.

17 Have you any idea of how many men would have to be kept on to keep the water down?—There would have to be four or five at the Ross.

18. And how many at the generating-station?—Two at the generating-station.

19. *Hon. Mr Guinness*] Could you not so arrange your shifts that the men could knock off work at 12 o'clock?—We could only work to 10 o'clock in the batteries.

20. What are the hours your three shifts work?—From 12 to 8, 8 to 4, and 4 to 12 at midnight.

21 Could that arrangement not be altered so that they could start at 4 a.m. and knock off at noon?—That would not effect it. We have the midnight on Saturday and 12 o'clock on Sunday to consider. Some one has to lose twelve hours. Where it will hit most is that if you have to stop your batteries the underground men will have to suffer.

22. Is that so? Could not the extra men you put on keep the batteries going?—Yes, but if the batteries stop it reduces the output. There is the duty on the stamps to consider, and you have to keep your stamps going to their utmost capacity. If you knock off work for twelve hours during a week there is serious loss.

23 My Bill provides that you start at 5 o'clock instead of 4 o'clock in the afternoon, and you only lose an hour in the last shift?—Your Bill is a splendid Bill for a single-shift mine. It is equivalent to the Daylight-saving Bill, because in the mine on Saturday, instead of starting at 8 o'clock, they would start at 4 o'clock, and stop at 12; but in all big mines, as Mr Stansfield says, it would mean a serious loss.

(No. 6.)

*Hon. Mr Guinness* I desire to put in the following letter I have received from the general secretary of the Thames Miners' Union, dated 11th August, 1910. "SIR,—I am instructed by the Committee of Management to convey to you their appreciation of your efforts for the improvement of the conditions of the workers of the Dominion. Your National Sick and Accident Bill met with the fullest approval of all, and will be of great benefit to all workers. *Re* the Half-holiday in Mines Bill, however, we would beg to point out that the benefit would work out unequally in mines working three shifts, and the night shift would work the full six days, the day shift not at all, and the afternoon shift would not be able to participate in any Saturday afternoon sports, as they would have to be at the mine by 4.30 to get ready for commencing work at 5 o'clock. We would respectfully suggest that the Bill should provide for each shift working only four hours on Saturday, so that the night shift would work from midnight to 4 a.m. Saturday morning, day shift from 4 a.m. to 8, and the third shift from 8 to noon, which would enable all to fully enjoy the benefit of Saturday afternoon off equally.—I have the honour to be, sir, yours obediently, W. H. LUCAS, General Secretary." I am prepared to suggest certain amendments to meet the wishes of the miners.

*The Chairman.* Is that all you wish to put in?—Yes. I think we had better take the objections that may be made against the Bill.