

and working at night, the men's nerves become unstrung, their constitution suffers, and they become run down, so that at last when they go to work at night they are more likely to meet with accidents than they would be under other conditions. We can prove beyond doubt that that is so. I do not think there is anything further I can say, but we do want a reduction in working-hours per week, and I do not think, myself, we can come to any satisfactory conclusion until the Bill says how many hours per week we shall work. My colleague from Waikino is in touch with the conditions at his place, and he can give you an outline in connection with battery-work. My union have no objection to a reduction in the hours of work, but at the same time they think that this Bill is unworkable.

3 *Mr Scott.*] If the night shift were done away with fewer men would be employed, would there not?—Not necessarily

4. Supposing two shifts are worked, will two shifts still employ the same number of men?—They could make provision whereby the men could work on either of the two shifts. They only work two shifts now in some places. If they wanted to have the same output they would find more places.

5. *Mr Seddon.*] What is your scheme for reducing the hours of work besides the taking-away of the night shift? Could you increase the hours of labour on day shift to do away with the night shift?—No.

6. You spoke about a reduction in the hours per week?—We will say you reduce the hours to forty, and the company and the workers would then fix the hours of work and the time to start. There is nothing to be frightened of in connection with that.

7 *Mr E H Taylor*] I should like to ask Mr Parry for a plain answer as to what effect the contract system has on competition between the men?—It has a great effect, simply because we notice it at different times at Waihi. For instance, if there is no available man about, there are no jobs put on the board, but as soon as it is found a few men are out of employment the jobs go on the board, because it is then the company knows there will be a great deal of competition. In connection with the Waihi working I may tell you we have very nearly half the men working on wages for contractors. The men that work on wages for these contractors run exactly the same risk as the contractors in the matter of responsibility, the contractors paying their men so-much per day, and reaping the benefit. And some of those men—the contractors—are always in favour of the contract system, and that is the system at the Waihi Mine. The company has no need to fight the workers, because they have established a system which compels the workers to fight amongst themselves.

8. Do you find that the contractors pay the average wage earned by the men on day-work, or more?—More than the award wages? Well, I should say so, 8s. 6d. being the award rate.

9. I heard a rumour that some of the contractors were endeavouring to keep the wages down to the award standard?—They pay from 10s. or 11s. to 12s. per day. With the permission of the Chairman, I should like to point out that at the last Arbitration Court sitting Mr Rhodes, when giving evidence as to whether he preferred the contract to the day-wages system, said he had worked it out from a unit point of view, and that more work could be got from two men under the contract system than from three men under wages. He said that the average wage of the workers in the mines was 12s. Now, under his unit system two men would earn £1 4s., but if he had to employ three men it would work out at £1 5s. 6d., so that he reaped the benefit. A man's wages are not based on his earning-power. But the Judge does not say how much power he shall sell. When the award is fixed it is not done on the basis of the amount of power we expend.

10. Then, the men are actually losing 1s. 6d. per day?—Yes.

11 What effect would the abolition of the night shift have on the companies generally: would the output be decreased?—There would be no decrease in output. We have coal-miners, and they do not work on the 12-o'clock shift, although some years ago they worked night shift, and if the abolition of the night shift were brought about it would find its own level. The mines would be opened up to a larger extent, and they would make provision to put out the output they required.

12. Then the abolition of the night shift would cause more men to be employed during the day shifts?—Yes.

13. I want to see more men employed, and if the abolition of the night shift would be the means of employing more men it would be a good thing for the workers. What effect would the forty-four-hours week have upon employment? Do you think that a forty-four-hours week would increase the number of men?—If you decrease the number of hours of labour, I think every man understands that you must increase the number of men.

14. You think that miners would earn a living-wage in the forty-four hours?—Yes. I should like to point out what we earn in my part of the country. Take June for the Martha Mine, 510 men employed: on Mr. Rhodes's own figures, at 12s. per day they earned £7,344 per month. Twenty-five per cent. of that money is kept back on an average six months in the twelve. Those men who are employed by the contractors are paid their full wages to that point, but the contractors' 25 per cent. is kept back, so that they have to pay wages-men and their own wages out of the 75 per cent. Twenty-five per cent. out of £7,344 is £1,836. That is kept back six months in the year. Then we have a scheme up there of keeping nine days in hand. Nine days in hand would amount to £2,754. They never received that for twelve months. Deposits on contracts (fifty contracts) averaged £5, amounting to £250. The money that is actually in hand every month, with the nine days in hand, amounts to £3,654. The men have to pay that before they have the right to work. The argument in the Arbitration Court was that it was impossible to get round and measure the contracts, so that they were compelled to keep the money or else increase the number of the staff, the effect of the argument of the attorney of the Waihi