

while working in a coal-mine in New Zealand, or for the relief of a family of any such miner who has died or who dies either before or after the commencement of the Act.

- (10.) The Workers' Compensation Amendment, 1911, which extends the definition of "worker" to any person whose earnings do not exceed £260 per year, which provides for compensation to partial dependants of a sum reasonable in proportion to the injury, which makes irrebutable the presumption that wife and children (legitimate or illegitimate) are dependent on a worker at the time of accident causing his death, which provides for the payment of medical and surgical expenses up to £1.
- (11.) The Workers' Dwellings Act, 1910, providing a new scheme of purchase by workers of land and dwelling from the State by means of a deposit of £10 and weekly or other instalments over a period of 25½ years. Precautions are taken to prevent speculation. Under this system workers are enabled to secure their own houses by means of what really is only a fair rent, considerable saving being effected in interest, cost of land, low legal charges, and economy in building effected by erecting the dwellings in groups.

2. The effect of this legislation, much of it not peculiar to the Dominion, has been an improvement in the general environment of the workers, giving them better sanitary conditions, shorter hours, greater freedom from worry due to necessary risks of employment, and the abolition of sweating. Whether their efficiency has increased in output per man as a result cannot be definitely decided from the evidence, nor do the available statistics throw light on the point. General effects.

But what is undoubtedly true is that in some trades the labour-cost of production has increased. An illustration from the coal trade is found in the evidence of Mr. Joachim (managing director of the Westport Coal Company (Limited)). Efficiency.

STEAM COAL IN TRUCKS AT FOOT OF DENNISTON INCLINE: AVERAGE COST OF PRODUCTION PER TON.

	s.	d.
1891-1900	7	2.25
1901-1910	8	1.87

PRICES OF WESTPORT HOUSEHOLD COAL FOR THE PERIODS 1891-1900 AND 1901-10.

	s.	d.
Wellington—		
1891-1900	36	0
1901-1910	34	0
Christchurch—		
1891-1900	37	0
1901-1910	34	0
Timaru—		
1891-1900	38	6
1901-1910	37	0
Wanganui—		
1891-1900	40	0
1901-1910	37	0

3. The labour-cost of production of the second ten-yearly period shows an increase of nearly a shilling per ton, while during the same period the price of coal to the consumer has been considerably reduced. In answer to questions put by the Chairman this witness asserted that the effects of the awards of the Arbitration Court had been to increase wages, but in spite of that the wholesale price of coal had been reduced during the second ten-yearly period as compared with the first ten-yearly period by no less than 5 per cent. Mr. Joachim's explanation of this phenomenon, is as follows: In answer to a question (No. 4, page 5) he stated as follows:— Effect on profits and prices.

The Chairman: Has that increase in wages affected the price charged for coal?—*Mr. Joachim:* No, it has not. The company so far has borne the increase out of their own pockets.

Question 6: Can you explain how it is that you have been able to pay increased wages and yet be able to sell coal at a cheaper price?—We have made less profits. In times past when business was better we provided better output plant and made better facilities for delivering, and we have been gradually eating up those advantages by the increased cost of labour.