

The State would have to give a living-wage to the miner, to enable him to keep his wife and family. There has always been an anomaly with regard to the burial of deceased miner's phthisis pensioners. The Act provides that his relatives are entitled to an amount not exceeding £20 for the burial expenses, but my experience was that up to 1925 a sum of £13 was allowed by the Pensions Commissioner. The difference between the £13 and somewhere about £22 10s. or £25 had to be made up by the widow and relatives. The Commissioner said that £13 was enough for the burial. In all the years of my term of office I never knew of £20 being allowed in the case of any man who died at Reefton or Waiuta. The distance from Waiuta to the Reefton Cemetery and back is fifty miles, and when an undertaker has to go that distance and back he wants about £25. The Commissioner apparently thought that the men had died in Reefton. I think that that matter requires to be looked into. There is another class of hardship that arises frequently under the present Act. A miner suffering from miner's phthisis may find the West Coast winter too hard for him, and his doctor may advise him to try a warmer climate. The Commissioner grants him leave to go to Australia. He will take his wife with him, and consequently may sell his home before leaving. Under the present law he can draw his pension for two years while living in Australia, but at the end of that time he must return to New Zealand. It will be recognized that even to come back and obtain permission to remain in Australia for another two years will cost him the equivalent of three or four months' pension. If he remained in Australia he would have to build or provide a home there, and he may have relatives there and desire to stay there. Remaining there may prolong his life by a year or two, but he has either to renounce his pension or come back to New Zealand and start to build another home here. I suppose the Pensions Department may say that an applicant may "put something over it" when so far away from New Zealand. I would suggest that if the Department got into touch with the police or the Pensions Department in Australia reports could be obtained which would enable our Commissioner of Pensions to renew the pension for another period of two years, without bringing the man back. Under the same heading there is another kind of hardship to which I would like to draw attention. It is the case of the married man whose doctor orders him to Australia. Say that he takes his wife with him, and he dies after having received his pension there for six or seven months. The widow can receive no pension whatever if he is buried in Australia. I have had several such instances. If the widow came back to New Zealand, fortified with all the necessary documents, it is possible that she might be able to establish her claim to a pension, but she cannot draw it and remain in Australia. I put the matter to Mr. Fache when he was Commissioner of Pensions, and he told me that in such a case the Department would not know how soon the widow might marry again and yet continue to draw the pension. I should say that that danger could be avoided by requiring the woman, each time she drew the pension, to make a declaration that she is still a widow. The Pensions Department in Australia, and the Australian police, could also advise our Department from time to time as to her position. I think the hardship I have indicated is one that should be remedied. Mr. McKane touched upon the question of the right of a mining pensioner to do some light work. There will be times when the pensioner will feel quite well, and able to do a little light work. If he were able to do that he would live longer, and be a better citizen and a brighter man. But, as far as the law is concerned, if he worked one day, and some officious member of the Post Office staff heard of it, his pension would be stopped. Sometimes such a man will be well for two or three days in the week, and in that case it would be better for him if he were allowed to do a little work, and so supplement his small pension if he feels able to do so.

7. Have you the details of the South African and New South Wales pensions systems?—They are in the Miner's Union office at Reefton.

8. You claim that there should be an X-ray examination of every individual miner?—Yes.

9. Would that mean that you would advocate having an X-ray plant in each gold-mining centre?—It seems to me that the radiologist who made the examinations could go to the northern goldfields once a year, and also come to Greymouth once a year. There could be X-ray plant at Waihi, and another at Waiuta, where the whole of the men could be examined in two or three days.

10. *Mr. Samuel.*] You say that miner's phthisis is a highly contagious disease, and that it can be contracted by using tools that are infected by the saliva of sufferers. What effect would that have on the prevalence of the disease? Would it not have the effect of giving tuberculosis to other men than miners themselves?—Yes.

11. In a case like that, the X-ray examination might not show miner's phthisis, but it would certainly show tuberculosis. We have had cases in which men have been in the last stages of tuberculosis contracted in the mine; when they have been examined under the X rays the doctors have said that the plate did not show miner's phthisis, but that the sufferer had tuberculosis—which was certainly contracted in the mine—therefore the man gets no pension. That is why I have maintained that the system is wrong. The man is in the last stages of a chest complaint, but does not receive the pension because the Medical Board says it is not miner's phthisis, but tuberculosis, which is one and the same thing if contracted in the mine?—I said that to the miner the external examination is of no use. When I said that I had something in my mind similar to what is behind your question. It is so difficult to diagnose with the external examination that when the disease is so pronounced as to enable a doctor to say of a patient whose history he knows that from an external examination he is suffering from miner's phthisis, that opinion should be acted upon. When a doctor who knows the history of the case says it is miner's phthisis as the result of his external examination, his opinion should guide the authorities. Where he will not give the applicant the benefit of any doubt, the applicant should have the right to come to Wellington, if necessary, for an X-ray examination.

12. Another reason why I raise that question is that a man may have a clean bill of health, inasmuch as he has been certified as being healthy for lodge purposes, and after several years of work