

41. Then, the decrease would be from thirty to forty minutes : would it or would it not?—The employers could compel the men to stop underground eight hours and a half.

42. Under what law?—The law of last session.

43. Will you point out the section under which an employer could do it?—Section 5.

44. Read it, please?—Clause 5, section (1) : " Subject to the provisions of the Act, a miner shall not be employed underground for a longer period in any day than eight hours, exclusive of meal-times." The words " exclusive of meal-times " qualify the whole thing.

45. But you said that the meal-time was from twenty minutes to half an hour : if the meal-time was twenty minutes, what would be the time of a miner underground, by law—how much less than it was before?—If it was twenty minutes the time underground, of course, would be eight hours and twenty minutes.

46. Is not that forty minutes less than before?—Yes—that is, if they have only twenty minutes for crib.

47. That is so. Now we will come to the Keep-it-Dark. You said that the time was eight hours and a quarter : what is the crib-time at the Keep-it-Dark?—Half an hour, I suppose ; about half an hour.

48. If you do not know definitely, please say so?—I might explain to the Committee that there is no definite time fixed for crib-time in the mines, as I have stated. I gave it as my opinion, based on my experience, that the time was from twenty minutes to half an hour.

49. Can you tell us what the crib-time is at the Keep-it-Dark or the Progress Mine?—I should say half an hour.

50. You are not sure?—Yes, I am practically certain.

51. Is the eight hours and a quarter that you mentioned from pit-mouth to pit-mouth?—Yes, that is so. The hours of labour that I am referring to are from pit-mouth to pit-mouth.

52. They have never been working eight hours at the face?—Never.

53. What is there in the law to compel the miners to work eight hours at the face?—There is nothing in the law that compels them to work eight hours at the face.

54. You say they have been working seven hours and a half at the face?—Yes ; and half an hour for crib-time makes the eight hours. Then there is the time taken up in going from and returning to the surface.

55. With reference to change of shift, does the work stop when the shifts are changed?—Most decidedly.

56. For how long?—It just depends on the distance the men work from the surface. The work always stops when they change shifts.

57. For how long?—You know that miners have peculiar customs, and some mines are different from others. I should say for a quarter of an hour, anyway.

58. That quarter of an hour is time in which the miners are not working?—If they are not working they are talking to one another about the work.

59. That is not work at the face?—It is practically work at the face.

60. Do you call talking work at the face?—Yes ; talking about the work. Although they are not at the face they are talking about the work—what they have done, and what they have to do, and so on.

61. Do you consider that work at the face?—It is undoubtedly part of the work of the mine.

62. You are speaking of gold-mines only?—I think my remarks would apply to coal-mines also, although I have not had a great deal of experience of them.

63. Did your remarks refer to pieceworkers or wages-men?—To both.

64. In the case of the pieceworkers, if their hours are reduced, will the men expect that their wages will continue as at present—I ask you this as secretary of a union?—Most decidedly they expect it.

65. They want to work shorter hours for the same wages?—Exactly.

66. Did you explain that you think that in a shorter time the miners could put out the same amount of stuff?—Certainly, from my own practical experience.

67. What limit would you put upon the decrease in time? By how much could the time be decreased and the output not reduced?—I believe, an hour a day.

68. You told us that the men in the Keep-it-Dark Mine are working seven hours and a half at the face : do you think that they could put out in six hours and a half as much as they are doing in seven hours and a half?—Yes ; because they could work harder in a shorter time, with less injury to their health. Persons working underground are working under very bad and unhealthy conditions—i.e., in bad air permeated with smoke. If they are permitted to work shorter hours I will guarantee that their output will be equally the same, and the work will be as efficiently done.

70. Will you guarantee that?—Yes.

71. And you place the limit at one hour less than the present time?—Yes, I should say so.

72. Are there day-wages men working on the surface of these mines—either on the surface, or in the mines, or anywhere about them?—Did you take my previous remarks to refer only to contractors?

73. I was asking you about pieceworkers only then?—The same remarks apply to day-wages men.

74. Are there day-wages men working at these mines?—They are mostly day-wages men who are employed there.

75. Not pieceworkers?—Very few pieceworkers.

76. Any down below?—Very few.

77. Then, your remarks apply more to day-wages men than to pieceworkers?—To both.

78. With regard to day-wages men, do you think that they too could put out, though working an hour a day less, the same amount as they have been putting out?—I think so.