

167. It would be a question for the Court to say whether, with the shorter hours, he should have the same wages, or less?—Yes.

168. If the Court decided to reduce the wages in proportion to the reduced hours, would the men prefer that to the existing conditions?—I cannot say. I would prefer the same wage.

169. Personally, putting yourself in the position of one of the men, would you rather have the same wages and the same hours as at present, or less hours and less wages?—I would rather have the same or higher wages with less hours of labour.

170. That is not my question. Would you rather have shorter hours and less pay, or the same hours and the same pay as at present?—I think you put it in two questions.

171. *The Chairman.*] If this Bill was passed, and you knew the Court was going to reduce the wages, would you rather have shorter hours and less pay, or the present hours and the present pay?—I would sooner have the shorter hours.

172. *Mr. J. Allen.*] And the less pay?—I would chance the less pay.

173. *The Chairman.*] With reference to a question put to you by Mr. Lang as to whether the Court should decide the matter of hours or whether it should be decided by Act of Parliament, have you read section 5, subsection (1), of the Act which this Bill is proposed to amend: "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"? Supposing that we fix the limit at eight hours underground: if the Court is considering a case afterwards where the air is very bad, is there anything in that section to prevent the Court awarding five hours underground as a day's work?—I do not know of anything.

174. We would not be preventing the Court reducing the hours of labour under this Bill?—Not that I know of.

175. Then, in the cases referred to by Mr. Lang, you know of nothing to prevent the Court fixing the time at five hours underground?—I do not know the legal aspect of the matter.

176. Under the award of the Arbitration Court the hours at the Allandale Coal-mine and other mines are eight hours' actual work at the face?—That is what I understand.

177. The employers down South have evidently considered the hours of labour awarded by the Court too long. They do not work the men the full eight hours at Kaitangata?—No; seven hours and a half at the face.

178. Although the Court fixed a limit of eight hours?—Just so. That is what we are working under.

179. *Hon. Mr. McGowan.*] In reply to a question by Mr. Allen, you said that you have yet to learn of a mine where good conditions obtain?—I mean the best of conditions.

180. Did you mean that there was no coal-mine in New Zealand where good conditions as to air, and so on, always obtain?—I meant without fluctuations.

181. You said that there was no mine where good conditions obtained: is that so, or is it not?—Will you allow me to explain? I meant that there was no mine where conditions obtained such as exist in regard to outside labour—*i.e.*, in the matter of fresh air, and so forth. There is no mine that I know of where such conditions obtain as pure fresh air.

182. Do you know any mines that are worked from an open cutting?—No.

183. In the coal-hewing, which is done by piecework, where the men, you say, could put out as much in six hours as in seven, do you know of any case in which the men themselves arrange to cut a certain quantity, and when that quantity of coal is ready to be trucked the "tired feeling" comes over them?—You must allow for exceptions. I was speaking generally.

184. I will take your own words: they "fritter away" time?—Do I take your question to mean that they put on a limit?

185. Yes; after producing a certain amount the tired feeling comes over them?—I do not know of any cases of the kind now. There were such cases at one time, a good many years ago, but I do not know of any now.

186. That state of things does not exist so far as the men you are acquainted with are concerned?—No.

187. On some days a miner produces a much greater quantity of coal than others: is it that the tired feeling comes on after a certain amount of coal has been won, or after a certain time has been worked—does it depend on the quantity of coal cut or the time worked?—It depends on the exertion.

188. The greater the exertion the sooner the tired feeling comes on?—The condition of the air has a lot to do with it.

189. If there is greater exertion there is greater output?—Yes, most certainly.

190. *Mr. Colvin.*] Have you had any experience in quartz-mines?—Yes, I have worked there.

191. What is the effect of working underground on a quartz-miner's health?—Men in quartz-mines are subject to the fumes of nitro-glycerine, or any other explosive used for blasting purposes. In places where I have worked, at the end of the shift we have been compelled to walk the ladders out of the shaft. Through inhaling the fumes and then having to climb the ladders the men were subject to what the medical men call dilated heart, if I remember aright. A good many men were subject to it in Reefton when I was there.

192. In your opinion, then, the working of shorter hours would be of great benefit to the health of the men working in quartz-mines in the Reefton district?—Yes; they would have more fresh air.

193. Do the unions that you are connected with only desire that Parliament should fix a maximum time for the hours of labour in mines, such as seven or seven and a half, and leave it to the Arbitration Court to fix shorter hours in inferior mines where the conditions are not good?—That is the feeling—that the maximum hours should be fixed.