

767. Were the hours of working fixed?—Yes.

768. Was anything said in the Arbitration Court award as to how the hours should be counted—whether from bank to bank or from face to face?—Yes.

769. What?—The award distinctly says eight hours at the face. The men walk in and out in their own time.

770. If this Act came into force, would you abide by the award of the Arbitration Court or by the Act?—If the employees wished to continue under the awards of the Court—which they do now—I would be perfectly satisfied. They seem to be satisfied—they must be satisfied or they would have filed a new reference, and taken the matter into Court again.

771. The Act of last session has not been adopted?—No, not at all.

772. Do you think this question of bank to bank or face to face would be better settled by an Act of Parliament, or do you think the Arbitration Court is best capable of settling it?—I consider that the Arbitration Court is the proper place to go to with any grievance, under the present Act of Parliament.

773. You are aware that coal-mines differ very much in different parts of the colony?—Certainly they do, to a great extent.

774. Do you think it would be fair to pass an Act that would apply to all coal-mines, with reference to the number of hours worked?—It would not be at all suitable.

775. You think it would be better for the Arbitration Court to settle the matter?—Yes. Every colliery could be represented, the owners could state their grievances, and the Court would be able to deal with them.

776. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] In answer to Mr. Gilfedder, I think you said that the miners had several “smoke-ho’s”?—Yes, there is no restriction with regard to that.

777. Is it customary in the Allandale Mine for the miners to smoke?—Yes, especially cigarettes.

778. Is the Allandale Mine subject to black damp at all?—Oh, no.

779. Or white damp?—No. I am not aware of white damp existing in New Zealand.

780. Did you get special permission from the Inspector of Mines to allow smoking in your mine?—I am not aware that there is any restriction without the permission.

781. I suppose that you know the coal-mines regulations fairly well?—Yes.

782. Unless you have the special permission of the Inspector of Mines have you any right to allow your men to take lucifers into the mine or strike a light there?—If the question cropped up we could certainly apply for the permission, which would be granted right away, because there is nothing to prevent it.

783. As a matter of fact, if you are allowing your men to smoke in the mine, you are acting contrary to the Mining Regulations?—I could not answer that.

784. You said that you only worked one shift in your mine?—Yes.

785. Did you ever work two shifts?—No; it would not be profitable at all.

786. Did you ever use a safety-lamp in any of the other mines that you have been connected with in Otago in order to see whether the mine was safe or not?—My experience has been confined to Green Island, Shag Point, and the Allandale Colliery during the time I have been in New Zealand.

787. Have you ever had occasion to use safety-lamps in any of those mines?—I have used a lamp occasionally to see if gas exists there, but such is not the case. You asked if there was black damp. It does occur in our collieries, and wherever it exists there is no explosive damp.

788. Does your underground manager or deputy examine the mine before the men start?—Yes; the deputy goes round to all the working-parts. He meets the men at a certain stage before they go near the working-faces and tells each man what he has got to do.

789. Does he report to the men on the surface or in the mine?—At the first station.

790. What do you call the first station?—The first from daylight, where the men accumulate. The deputy meets them there.

791. That is in the mine?—Yes.

792. Your custom now is to work eight hours and a half?—That is the custom.

793. Do you allow that time—when the men are kept at the station while the deputy is examining the mine—out of the eight hours?—The men are not kept at the station. The deputy is there meeting them as they arrive. They have only to pass by.

794. That is in your case?—Yes.

795. Supposing he had to keep them there for an hour or two?—They are not kept a second.

796. But say in other cases?—You are talking of where there are explosives in the mines.

797. In answer to Mr. Herries, you said that you considered the Arbitration Court should decide the working-hours in each particular case?—Yes.

798. Suppose the Arbitration Court were abolished altogether, who should decide then?—It should be left between the employer and the employee.

799. Which would you prefer, to work under the awards of the Arbitration Court as you are doing now, or to work in the way in which you did before the Arbitration Act was passed?—I am perfectly satisfied with the existing awards as they stand now.

800. *Mr. Guinness.*] Is your mine worked by a shaft or a tunnel?—By an incline.

801. What is the length of that incline?—1,200 ft.

802. What do you think is a fair average time for miners working in a coal-mine to take for their meal-time?—Half an hour is a reasonable time.

803. The miners at your mine, I believe, have time for what they call “smoke-ho”; is that so?—That is so.

804. At what times do the men knock off for smoking?—Whenever they think proper.