

142. Have you ever heard that they have gas at the Thames?—I am not acquainted with the Thames.

143. Are you aware that when the dispute was before the Court at Waihi Mr. Boyd and Mr. Ziman were sent up from Reefton in regard to the wages question?—That is not correct.

144. It is incorrect that Mr. Boyd was sent up from Reefton, and gave evidence?—It is incorrect as far as I am aware. I speak for my own companies.

145. Mr. Ziman's name is in the agreement?—I am speaking of David Ziman. You are speaking of Jacob.

146. Did not Jacob Ziman represent David?—David Ziman, I believe, had some interest in one of the mines near the Waihi.

147. But did not Jacob represent David on the Coast also?—No.

148. If he said so in connection with the dispute, was he telling the truth?—All I know is this: that at the time the dispute was on no communication on the subject passed between Jacob Ziman and my company—the Consolidated Goldfields—authorising him to appear for or represent the company in any shape or form.

149. Are you aware that witnesses were brought up to show that the mines at Reefton were in such a bad condition that the miners up north could not expect the same wages as those at Reefton, that they should work for at least 40 per cent. less?—That I do not know. The contention that we raised some two years earlier, was that the conditions in the Reefton mines were more favourable than in those up north, and that our men should work for the same wages, or less.

150. You wished the wages paid at your mines to be reduced to those paid at Waihi?—We said that, if it was reasonable to pay the men at Waihi 7s. and 8s. a day, that was a reasonable wage to pay at our field, all things being equal, as they are, or more favourable, at Reefton.

151. Then, you would be surprised to learn that Mr. Ziman and Mr. Boyd came up to Auckland and gave evidence to show that Waihi was in so much better a condition that the men there could not expect to get within 40 per cent. of the wages paid on the Coast?—I may be misinformed, but at the time the dispute arose I believe both those gentlemen were residents of Auckland.

152. If they said that, would you believe them?—As I said before, I do not know the conditions in the North Island, excepting by hearsay; but I can say this: from what I have learnt from gentlemen who do know the conditions there, the Reefton mines, as far as the working-conditions are concerned, are the best in the colony. Apart from sanitation, and so on, the conditions of life are not unfavourable at Reefton. A man working at the Progress Mine can get board and lodging for 15s. a week, so the cost of living is not high. The weather is certainly colder in the winter at Reefton than it is in the north, but with that exception there are no conditions surrounding the Reefton mines, as far as I know, that render them less favourable—in fact, the reverse is the case.

153. There is very little water in the mines at Reefton?—There is practically no water. There is not a mine-pump there.

154. There are very few wet places?—Few or none. There are none that you can characterize as wet places.

155. And there is no gas?—No gas at all.

156. *Mr. Guinness.*] Was a dividend paid to shareholders in the Progress Mines in New Zealand last year?—Yes.

157. What was it?—There were two dividends of 5 per cent. each.

158. Can you remember what the total profit for the year was—how much of that the dividends absorbed, and what amount was carried forward?—No, I do not remember. I thought I had brought the balance-sheet with me, but I find I have got the previous year's.

159. Are the figures to be found in the *Mines Record*?—That is very probable, though I have not seen them there. If it would be of any information to the Committee I should be pleased to forward a copy of the balance-sheet.

160. You are not an experienced miner, nor do you work in a mine, nor have anything to do with the work underground?—No.

161. Do you know what time the miners usually take for crib, or what is the time that has been reported to you?—It has been reported to me that they take from twenty minutes to half an hour.

162. Is any time taken up in the morning or the afternoon by what they call “smoke-ho”?—Not that I am aware of.

163. The miners made no suggestion, when you were making the last agreement with them, for an alteration of the hours of labour?—No, I have no recollection of any suggestion being made as to an alteration of the hours of labour. With regard to the dividend that Mr. Guinness was asking about, I would like to add that, though we have declared a 10-per-cent. dividend for the year, at the present time—or, rather, at the end of the year—we could only report that there was two years' ore in sight, as we have had no stone in the bottom of the mine for the last two years, so the life of the mine—I speak of the Progress—is under two years, unless further ore is discovered.

PERCY NICHOL KINGSWELL examined. (No. 15.)

164. *The Chairman.*] What is your name?—Percy Nicol Kingswell.

165. Where do you live, Mr. Kingswell?—At Reefton.

166. What is your occupation?—I am legal manager of several companies—three quartz-mining companies.

167. What are the three?—The Kirwan's Reward, Alpine Extended, and Victoria Range Gold-mining Companies.

168. Have you got a mine-manager's certificate?—No; I am legal manager.