

with an industrial agreement or with sending a reference to the employers that you have to consider. There are different concessions that you want to get, and sometimes you give way on one point in order to get another. But the miners—the general body of miners in this colony—have never looked to the Arbitration Court to get this kind of concession. It has always been a plank in their political platform.

367. The miners would rather get it by pressing candidates for Parliament than by demanding it from the mine-managers?—They would rather get it in the easiest possible way. There is no doubt about that.

368. *Mr. J. Allen.*] How long ago was it that they started to make this demand—ten years?—Yes, and longer.

369. What was the demand?—Eight hours from bank to bank.

370. Was anything said about the meal-time then?—No. Eight hours from bank to bank was the time specified.

371. Is there any record of that?—I dare say there would be records of it.

372. Can you produce any?—I could not produce any now.

373. Can you send us any record of such an application?—I dare say it could be got.

374. Who was the demand made to eight years ago?—It was a plank in the union's platform.

375. When was the demand for eight hours from bank to bank first made?—I do not quite grasp what you mean.

376. *The Chairman.*] Did the miners make such a demand on the employers, or on anybody?—On candidates for Parliament.

377. *Mr. J. Allen.*] When did the men first make a demand on the employers for eight hours from bank to bank?—I do not know that they have ever made any demand on the employers—not in connection with Arbitration Courts and industrial agreements.

378. Are you speaking for yourself?—Yes.

379. Do you know about other mines or miners?—No. The possibilities are that if I had made demands others would have done so.

380. You do not know whether the Otago Coal-miners' Union ever made such a demand?—I do not.

381. You yourself have never made a demand on the employers such as is referred to?—As I said, we have a number of matters to consider in making industrial agreements, and we regulate our demands to suit ourselves—that is as regards other matters also.

382. Do you generally make excessive demands in order that you may have something to give away?—No, I do not think so.

383. Do you know if that has ever been done?—I do not think it has.

384. Are you sure?—I am certain that we never make any excessive demands.

385. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] You know my electorate pretty well?—Yes.

386. There are no branches of the miners' union of any kind in my district?—No, I do not think there are.

387. Do you think that if such a demand as has been mentioned had been made on me as a candidate for Parliament that would have been likely to have influenced my opinion if I did not believe in it?—I do not think so.

388. As a matter of fact, although there is no branch of the miners' union in my electorate, you are aware that I have supported the principle?—Yes.

389. So that the pressure, referred to by Mr. Herries did not actually exist?—I do not suppose that any candidate would promise to support and advocate a matter of this kind unless he thought it right and proper.

390. As the Minister of Mines is now here, I will resume questioning you on the matter that I was asking you about before. You said that you had received a telegram from the secretary of the quartz-miners' union at the Thames with reference to changing shifts?—Yes.

391. What was the reply that Mr. Lucas sent you?—That it was customary to change in the chambers.

392. Did he say whether that had been the custom for some time?—He did not state that.

393. Is this telegram something like the one that you received: "It is customary to change shifts in chambers, and not at face, both Thames and Coromandel?—Yes, that is it. If any attempt is made to compel the men to change at the faces it will be increasing their present hours of labour.

394. At Reefton, for instance, what difference in time would it make changing shifts, say, in the chamber at the bottom of the shaft, or at the surface?—Very little difference.

395. At the Globe or the Keep-it-Dark?—It would be less at the Keep-it-Dark.

396. Would it make five minutes' difference?—It might make ten minutes.

397. How long does it take the cage to go up?—That depends on the number of men to be hauled.

398. Take one cageful?—I could not tell you the time, but it would be very short.

399. Not more than five minutes?—It would not be five minutes.

400. So that the difference between changing at the chamber at the bottom of the shaft and changing at the surface could not exceed five minutes?—If the men are compelled by law to change at the bottom of the shaft their hours will be increased. I would like to add this to my evidence: As there seems to be a doubt whether the miners have asked for the eight hours from bank to bank, I say that we will have a general meeting of members of the union and send the result to the Committee.

401. *Mr. Guinness.*] What is the proportion of unionists to non-unionists among the miners in the Reefton district?—There are very few non-unionists in the Reefton district.

402. What is the proportion?—Fully 95 per cent. of the men employed in the district are members of the union. There are very few outside the union.