

403. *Hon. Mr. McGowan.*] You have had a good deal of experience in quartz-mines?—Yes.

404. Did you ever work on a specimen lode?—I have worked on very rich stone.

405. “Specimen lode” is a term understood by all miners?—Yes, I have worked on specimen lodes.

406. Did you leave the lode when you were changing shifts and go away?—Yes.

407. Where was that?—At the Keep-it-Dark Mine.

408. On a specimen lode?—Yes.

409. Do you know that at mines where they work three shifts the men who are working on a specimen lode work only two shifts, and the drive is locked-up?—No, I never knew of a case of that kind. I might add that not 10 per cent. of the quartz-miners in New Zealand have ever worked on specimen lodes.

JOHN FOSTER recalled. (No. 17.)

410. *Mr. Guinness.*] You have been working for some years in a quartz-mine, I believe?—Yes.

411. Can you inform the Committee whether any general desire has been expressed in the past by the miners to have the proposed amendment made in the Mining Act, providing for eight hours from bank to bank, inclusive of meal-time?—I may say that I have not worked in a quartz-mine for a number of years; but, under the rules of our association—the Trades Council—these things have to be put on the order paper every year, and I know that the eight hours from bank to bank matter has been put on the order paper by the Reef-ton miners for the last six years—i.e., since the Council has been in vogue.

412. What do you mean when you say that the matter has been placed on the order paper?—The matter is sent, to be placed on the order paper for business.

413. *The Chairman.*] Is the business discussed?—Yes, in the Council.

414. *Mr. Guinness.*] Could that be done without the miners agreeing to the proposed change?—I do not think so. Under our system of placing things on the order paper, a special meeting is held for the occasion, and whatever that special meeting decides is sent forward to be placed on the order paper.

415. Do you consider working in a quartz-mine as unhealthy as you said it was in a coal-mine?—Yes, I consider that working in a quartz-mine is unhealthy, more especially on account of dynamite, gelatine, and so forth, being used.

416. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Were you the president of the union at Denniston in 1894 or 1895?—I have been president at Denniston continuously since 1895.

417. Mr. Hollows was secretary at that time?—Yes.

418. Do you recollect yourself, Mr. Hollows, and one or two others asking me to introduce you to Mr. Cadman (who was Minister of Mines then) when he was at Denniston in 1895, and you asked him to give you an eight-hours day from bank to bank?—I do.

419. I think that was in 1894?—I believe it was in the latter part of 1894 or at the beginning of 1895. I could not say exactly.

420. The fact of your deputation waiting on Mr. Cadman then showed that you wanted the eight hours from bank to bank at that time, and you have been trying to get it ever since?—Yes; we can go back fourteen years, and can point to a deputation here in Wellington on the same question.

421. *Mr. J. Allen.*] When you made that application to Mr. Cadman did you consider the question of the meal-time?—Yes, it was all taken into consideration. We simply asked for a Bill of eight hours from bank to bank, including the meal-time.

422. I suppose the miners would like the time to be seven hours from bank to bank, provided they got the same wages?—I do not suppose they would grumble about it.

423. *Mr. Herries.*] If this demand has been made for such a long time, how is it that whenever an industrial agreement has been made or a case brought before the Arbitration Court the demand has not been put forward?—It has been.

424. As far as your knowledge is concerned?—As far as my knowledge is concerned. We have shown it in black and white on our reference every year, but the Court has refused to grant it because the Government had under consideration an Eight Hours Bill.

425. We have had put before us the demands made by the miners' union in reference to some gold-mine that Mr. Free is connected with, and the eight hours from bank to bank is not asked for there?—That I cannot speak about.

426. As far as your knowledge goes, the principle has always been asked for in the demands?—Yes, always.

427. *Mr. Guinness.*] Is there anything you would like to add to what you have already said?—There is one thing that I would like to mention. It has always been the custom to change shifts at the chamber or the surface during my experience in quartz-mines.

428. Not at the face?—Not at the face. And I am of the opinion, as a practical miner, that a miner can do as much in seven hours as in eight. That is my firm opinion.

429. In a quartz-mine?—Yes.

430. *Hon. Mr. McGowan.*] Was it in the North or the South that you worked in a quartz-mine?—In the South Island.

431. Did you ever work on a specimen lode in a quartz-mine?—No.