

96. So far as the men are concerned, would it be wise to make a hard-and-fast rule by law?—I do not think so.

97. You know the object of the Arbitration Court?—Yes.

98. Is it to consider such instances as I have suggested—the difference in mines and employment?—I think it ought to be left to the Arbitration Court. I think that would give satisfaction to both employer and employee.

99. The Arbitration Court is in a position to take all the circumstances into consideration?—Yes.

100. And to allot to one man eight hours from bank to bank, to another seven hours if necessary, and to alter the wages if necessary?—Yes. I think it would be better to leave it to the Arbitration Court.

101. You were asked by Mr. McKenzie some questions about the health of miners. Did you read the evidence that was placed before the Committee last year?—I believe I did.

102. There was given in evidence before the Committee a table of comparative mortality for men in all occupations between twenty-five and sixty-five years of age. I will recall it to your memory by asking you to look at it. [Handed to witness.] Tell us what the heading of the table is?—"Comparative Mortality of Males, Twenty-five to Sixty-five Years of Age, in Different Occupations, from All Causes, for the Years 1890-92, all Males being taken at 1,000, England and Wales."

103. Will you tell us the mortality in the case of a coal-miner?—925.

104. As compared with that, the mortality of a quarryman is?—1,176.

105. Which, therefore, of those two is the occupation which is most liable to cause death between those two ages—from twenty-five to sixty-five?—I am not sure of the way the percentage goes here.

106. The average of males is taken at 1,000?—Yes.

107. Is the quarryman over the average?—Yes.

108. There is more mortality amongst quarrymen than amongst average males?—Yes.

109. Is the coal-miner above or below the average?—Considerably below. I notice that a file-maker's goes to 1,810.

110. You know what a file-maker's work is?—Yes.

111. Is it not very dangerous?—Yes, it goes 1,810. A mason's is more than a coal-miner's.

112. On the next page you will find the statistics for Scotland. What is the average of the coal and shale miner there?—973.

113. Below the average?—Yes.

114. What is the mason?—1,400.

115. A long way above the average?—Yes. The miner seems to be about the medium in all cases.

116. Do these tables show that coal-mining is an occupation which is more liable to mortality than ordinary occupations?—It seems to be about the average.

117. If anything, a little under?—Yes.

118. Now, abandoning the tables for the time being, will you give us your own experience with regard to mortality amongst miners?—I do not think there is any more mortality than there is in other occupations. I think it is by a long way a more healthy occupation than working in a sluicing claim on the surface.

119. With regard to the alteration in the hours of work from the existing arrangements to eight hours from bank to bank: at most of the mines do they work one shift or three?—I think the greater portion of the mines work one shift. It is really at only large mines where they work three.

120. So that if they work on three shifts there is no possibility of making up for lost time?—No possibility.

121. With regard to clause 3 of the Mining Bill: that would cut out the words "or hereafter" from the first line of section 9 of last year's Act. It would mean that it would take out of the hands of the Arbitration Court altogether the settling of the question of the time and fix it by statute?—Yes.

122. And that would apply to all mines, whether badly ventilated or not?—Yes. I think it would be much better to leave it to the Court. Every one has got accustomed to the settling of disputes by the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, and it much better to let everything be settled by the Court.

123. I would like to ask you a few questions about the Coal-miners' Relief Fund, mentioned in clause 3 of Mr. Colvin's Bill. Do you know about that?—Yes.

124. Will you explain to us briefly what it is?—Coal-miners' relief is obtained from $\frac{1}{4}$ d. or $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a ton that the owners pay, and this goes into a relief fund.

125. Was that introduced before the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Act came into existence?—Yes.

126. Do you think that the latter covers the same ground to a large extent?—I think the employers ought to be relieved of this altogether when they are subject to the Compensation for Accidents Act.

127. Why?—For the simple reason that it is putting a deal more upon us. We have a deal more risk to take under the Workers' Compensation Act.

128. Does the Compensation for Accidents Act cover the ground to a large extent that was covered by the Coal-miners' Fund?—It covers far more. It costs us far more to insure the men now than before.

129. Does the Compensation for Accidents Act cover the ground that was covered by this fund to provide for injury?—Yes; I think Compensation for Accidents covers the same thing.

130. So there is no necessity for keeping the fund up?—I do not see any necessity.

131. Are you aware that when insuring, either with the Government Accident Insurance Department or any company, they will only insure you up to a limited amount?—Yes.

132. And that beyond that you have to take all the risk yourself?—Yes.

133. Would it not be a fair thing, if this clause were not repealed as you suggest, to utilise the money to cover what you cannot cover now by insurance?—I think it would be a very good thing to do.