

111. What time do they go to work?—One mine starts at 7 in the morning, and the other at 8.

112. Is that at the face or at the mouth?—At the face.

113. *Mr. Macpherson.*] Are there any means of conveying the men to the mine?—No.

114. Are you of opinion that the Arbitration Court is a competent tribunal to deal with this question?—Yes.

115. You were of that opinion when the Court refused to give an award some few years ago?

—Yes, I say the Court is quite competent.

116. Do you think it is the function of the Court to regulate matters relating to mining?—Yes.

117. And not the Legislature?—I say the Arbitration Court should be the body to regulate these things.

118. And you think it would be a mistake for the Legislature to take that power?—I do.

119. *Mr. Colvin.*] Do you think the Legislature by this Act is taking away the power from the Arbitration Court?—They are restricting the power of the Court. They are enacting by a statute that you must do a certain thing, and if the hours are to be restricted by statute my contention is that a reduction in the wages must be made, which would be detrimental to both parties.

120. During the last few years have the men asked for an award to be made in two cases?—Yes, in 1905.

121. And the Court refused to make an award?—Yes. The Court, after hearing evidence of an exhaustive nature from both sides, decided that on account of the large number of interests affected it would not be equitable to vary the award.

122. The men were asking for a fresh award to be made after the previous one had run out: Did you show that the men were satisfied with the previous award?—They are never satisfied.

123. Supposing you represented the company, and the company was not satisfied with the award given, and after the term of the award was up made application for a fresh award, would you not consider you were not getting fair play if you did not get it?—If that law with the bank-to-bank clause were passed we should have to accept the inevitable and apply to the Court for another wages award while that clause stood; but I contend it would be disastrous to the industry.

124. But take it the other way: Supposing you applied for an award and were prepared to take the responsibility whether for or against you. If the Court gave no award, would you consider you were badly treated?—I suppose, looking at that particular case, we should.

125. What do your men average per day?—The miners at Denniston average between 14s. and 15s. per man.

126. What was the average when you were here on a former occasion?—I cannot speak as to that, but I do not think it would be any worse. I am speaking for Denniston, not for Granity.

127. You are aware that during the last ten years the price of coal has gone up?—I am aware that during the last year or two it has gone down. The Westport Coal Company is selling coal shillings a ton less than it did a few years back. It has gone down I could not tell you how much.

128. You remember when they put on the accident insurance—I think it was 3d. a ton?—Yes.

129. And the company put on 1s. a ton?—It was only 3d. a ton—not 1s.

130. Threepence was about the average cost, and 1s. was put on at the port. They charged the consumer 1s. a ton more?—I cannot answer that question positively.

131. What length of time does your haulage-rope run, on the average, per day?—Under seven hours on the average. But that does not affect the case one iota. That is because the miners do not produce enough coal to keep the rope going, and we cannot put on sufficient men to keep our ropes going.

132. You work two shifts?—Yes, but there is a stoppage. One mine starts at 7 o'clock and the other at 8 o'clock, and work till 3 and 4 p.m. respectively.

133. If the men are willing to take the responsibility, whatever it may be, of an Arbitration Court award, do you not think the Court should take the responsibility of making one?—No, I think the clause ought to be deleted altogether.

134. You will admit that the price of provisions has gone up in the Buller district?—I cannot admit that by my own domestic bills.

135. You admit that meat has gone up in price?—Yes, that has gone up through the operations of the trust in Westport.

136. What do you pay for your meat?—Ninepence per pound for very inferior meat, and 8d.

137. What do you pay 9d. per pound for?—For roast beef and rump-steak.

138. What do you pay for mutton?—Eightpence per pound.

139. Are you aware that the butchers are supplied at Denniston with meat at less than 4d. per pound?—I happen to know that at one time it was very low from the fact that a quarter of beef was lost on the incline, and the bill was brought in to me to settle, and that opened my eyes.

140. You say 9d. per pound, and I am in a position to prove that it does not cost more than 4d.; but it is a well-known fact that the price of provisions is higher all over New Zealand than it was a few years ago?—Well, I tell you there is scarcely any appreciable difference except in the price of potatoes and flour, and when the duty comes off those we shall be able to get them almost for nothing.

(Witness recalled on Friday, 21st September.)

*Witness:* I made a statement yesterday relative to the twenty-five minutes each way. It has now been stated that it was forty minutes. In the Court, in the statement of the Judge, the travelling-time underground was to be twenty minutes each way. That was not questioned in Court. In connection with the number employed, I think I said there were 780: I wish to qualify that by reducing the number by 54 at Granity. I omitted the number of miners at Granity. The number