

Company being that in order to fulfil this engagement the men had to lose this amount of money. The figures are approximate, but are very nearly correct.

15. Then, during the whole year there was about £3,000 in wages actually held by the company?—That is so. That is only men working underground.

16. Those companies grant no interest on that deposit?—No.

17. Do you think they ought to do so?—Most decidedly. For all men employed (150 artisans excepted) the amount kept back by the company is £7,024.

18. Do you think it would be wise to insert a clause in the Mining Amendment Act to the effect that all such moneys held are to bear interest?—Yes. I think there should be some clause inserted in the Mining Amendment Act whereby no man should be allowed to keep nine days' wages, and also 25 per cent. on a contract is absolutely ridiculous in the extreme.

19. *Mr. Anderson*.] What do they keep it for?—A man works nine days in hand and 25 per cent., but really only receives 75 per cent. of his earnings until the contract is finished; so if they paid the men in full on pay-day for the work done they would still hold nine days in hand.

20. *Mr. Taylor*.] Would the men be better satisfied if that 75 per cent. was raised to 90 per cent.?—I cannot see that they should keep one iota.

21. *Mr. J. Duncan*.] I cannot understand why money is kept back at all. What is the reason for making deductions for the nine days?—Mr. Rhodes lives at Auckland, and he says that the cheques have to be forwarded to him. If he lived in Italy it would be all the same.

*The Chairman*. The arbitration award allows this to be done. That is the trouble.

22. *Mr. J. Duncan*.] Do the day-men suffer by this too, and have they to work until the end of the work before this is done?—No, you get nine days in hand; but if a man works continuously for twelve months this is lying in the office until the twelve months is over.

23. Is there any other employment in New Zealand where there is a similar deduction? In the sawmilling business I am not aware that the nine days is kept back?—It is a fact that the money is kept back.

24. I sympathize with any man who has his wages kept back?—We have a system there at the present time, the shrinkage system, and I say this that it is robbery.

25. Explain the shrinkage system?—Instead of filling in as you cut your stope out, you just run sufficient out from underneath to allow you to keep breaking on, and this dirt is all run out when the stope is filled in. This is to do away with extra timbering, and that kind of thing, and means a great reduction in expenses, but we have never received anything for it. Under this shrinkage system a man gets paid for so-much dirt that he runs through the stope; but, as a matter of fact, you cannot run more out than you are able to work with, and you are paid on what you run out. Say, for instance, you get 4s. per ton for dirt you truck out, you only get 3s. 6d. for the dirt that remains in the stope, because you get this for trucking it out.

*The Chairman*. I think we are now getting into a discussion on the Mining Bill, and we are only dealing with the Half-holiday Bill now.

26. *Mr. J. Duncan*.] I understood the former witness to say the last award was forty-four hours, and that there had been an increase to forty-seven hours. Has the Court power to alter the hours for you?—That may be in the district where Mr. Fagan comes from, but it does not obtain at Waihi. We work forty-six hours day and afternoon. The night shift works forty-seven.

27. *Mr. Colvin*.] Does this Bill give the relief the miners are actually looking for?—No.

28. I understand the miners want a forty-four-hours-week Bill passed through Parliament? Yes.

29. And if the night shift were done away with, with very little expense to the company equally as many men could get out the same quantity of quartz?—Yes.

30. You want another three hours off?—Yes.

31. And this Bill before the Committee does not give them?—No.

32. *Hon. Mr. Guinness*.] You will see the Bill proposes to give five hours more, Mr. Parry?—I do not think it gives anything at all, because if the Bill goes through at it stands the company could open their mine and work from 5 to 12. That would mean seven hours' work. It would give just a little benefit.

33. If there are three shifts in the mine, that is twenty-four hours' work, and the Bill says five hours shall not be worked on holidays: that reduces the hours of labour by five. Would you agree to an alteration of the Bill by striking out "twelve to five" and saying that each shift shall only work four hours? Would that be practicable?—That would give forty-four hours a week. Of course, it would develop into the same thing almost, because employers and workers would make arrangements between themselves.

34. They would have a declaration of the Legislature that no man shall work more than forty-four hours?—If forty-four hours were put in, they would have the agreement worked so that they would have the advantage on the Saturday.

35. Would not the alteration be effective if it were stated that half-shifts only shall be worked on Saturdays?—If it was made law that each man work only four hours on Saturdays, that would have the desired effect.

36. How would they benefit by the forty-four hours? What is the difference between forty-four hours' work and saying men shall on Saturdays work half-shifts?—There is no difference.

37. If the Bill were altered in that direction, would it, in your opinion, be then effective?—Yes, because people would have to make an arrangement as to what time to start work. If the Bill says that no more than four hours shall be worked on Saturday, that means forty-four hours.

38. It could be put in both ways?—I think "no man to work more than four hours on Saturday" would fix up the difficulty, because that would mean forty-four hours' work.

39. Have you had any experience of working a forty-four-hours week in any of the States?—No.