

Blanket-washers' actual work was merely boys' work, for, as his information went, the work was attended to by the man in charge of the shift at the battery. If boys could not do it, girls could; it was merely passing a blanket through a trough and washing it. Engine-drivers and certificated winders were now paid £3 10s., and £3 was paid to the men at air-compressors, of whom they only employed three. There was a distinction between winders and engine-drivers. Blacksmiths were paid according to their work, the minimum being 11s. 8d. Brace-men were paid 8s. The responsibilities they had were such that nothing but gross carelessness could account for their not being undertaken. Chamber-men were paid 9s. 6d., and the work was worth no more than miner's work. The working-hours of many of their company's employes were seven and a half. To concede to the demands of the union for forty-six hours would prevent men from being at the face when the preceding shift left. As regards lifting the men where the height exceeded 250 ft., Mr. Foster said that the adoption of this clause practically prevents all prospecting shafts below that depth; it would practically shut down many of the smaller mines; it would necessitate a special winding apparatus being erected. It might be necessary to sink 300 ft., but in order to avoid erecting a special hoisting-engine they would have to cease sinking 50 ft. short. The clause would have no effect on his company, as they hoisted all their men. As to abolishing contracting, the company wished to stand to their rights. They did not let contracts with a view to taking advantage of the men. They instituted contracts to expedite the work, and had offered bonuses for the fastest work. They did not have the danger from the coal-gas in quartz mines, and hence there was no necessity for such rigid inspection. To allow the union to send delegates would be to cause irritation. But they agreed that it was desirable to have a resident Inspector appointed by the Government, and they would ask the Board to recommend a resident Inspector being appointed. It was manifestly to the interest of the company to keep the air good, as the men could work better. Regarding holidays, the company had no objection to the Christmas holidays or the Queen's Birthday. On the other days, if the men so desired, they could go off work, provided they gave notice. If the men desired to work on the Easter holidays and the Queen's Birthday the company would not prevent them. If the clause respecting a week's notice were adopted it would mean that the company would keep a man a week after he had been found no good. The men were engaged by the day, and the question of a week did not enter into it. The Sunday work done at present was that which was absolutely necessary in order to allow work to be proceeded with on other days. The absolute advantage of such Sunday work was that the men were able to be kept on, to the advantage of themselves and their employers. To give preferential treatment in the matter of employment to union men they objected. They made no distinction with regard to religion in employing men, and they objected to giving preference solely to members of a secret organization.

The Conciliation Board made the following recommendation:—

(1.) Shift-bosses' wages as at present, 11s. 8d., but suggests that they should not be members of the union. (2.) Timber-men as at present, 11s. 8d. (3.) Rise, winze, and shaft wages, 10s. (4.) Miners' wages, 9s. 6d. (5.) Truckers as at present, 8s. (6.) Feeders as at present, 8s. (7.) Struck out. (8.) Pick-and-shovel labour, 8s. 6d. (9.) Bushmen, 9s. 6d. (10.) Men in charge of shift at batteries, 10s. (11.) Blanket-washers, 8s. (12.) Men working rock-drills, 10s. (13.) Engine-drivers and wheel-men, stationary, £3; with winders' certificates, £3 10s. per week. (14.) Blacksmiths, 11s. 8d. to 13s. 4d. (15 and 16.) Brace- and chamber-men, 9s. per day. (17.) Saturday afternoon shift to leave the mine at 11 p.m.; Sunday night shift to go on at 1 a.m. (18.) Struck out. (19.) Where tenders are called for contracts, written specifications shall be provided to work by. (20.) The Board will recommend to the Government the advisability of an appointment of an Inspector for gold-mines only. (21.) The Easter holidays are done away with; Christmas holidays to commence on Christmas Eve and end on New Year's Day, both days inclusive; and that Queen's Birthday and Labour Day be holidays. (22.) Struck out. (23.) That necessary work only be performed on Sunday. The extra pay in this clause was struck out. (24.) Residents of the district, if competent, to have preference of employment.

The award in McKay's case is: Pick-and-shovel men, 8s. 6d.; bushmen, 9s.; blacksmiths, 11s. 8d. to 13s. 4d.

The parties did not agree to these recommendations, and the Arbitration Court gave an award (see October list).

Dunedin.

Dispute between the Baker's Union and various Master Bakers.—The rules of the union provided as follows:—

For bread-bakers a working-day of eight hours' duration, starting at 4 a.m., with half an hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner; in houses where dough-machines are used, dough-men only may start an hour and a half sooner; time and a quarter to be allowed for overtime up to 6 p.m., and time and a half to be allowed up to 10 p.m., and that no work be done after that time; for work done on a-holiday the workman to receive time and a half payment besides the weekly wage. In regard to apprentices, it is stipulated that they must be bound for a period of four years after a month's trial, and that no more than one apprentice to one, two, or three men be employed, and that there be not more than two boys, either apprentices or improvers, in any one house. No bread-carter to be employed in a bake-house, but a baker may deliver bread so long as he works eight hours per day only. No foreman to receive less than £3 per week, second hand £2 10s., and table-hands £2 5s. A jobber employed by the day to receive not less than 10s., or by the week £2 10s. The rules further provide that preference in employment be given to members of the union.

The rules for pastrycooks provide that no member of the union shall work more than eight hours a day, commencing at 7 a.m., with half an hour for breakfast and one hour for dinner. If overtime is required, time and a quarter shall be allowed up to 8 p.m., and time and a half up till 12 p.m., and that no work be done after that hour, except in case of emergency, when double time must be paid. The rules for rates of wages are practically the same as for bakers. No boys under fourteen years of age or over seventeen are to be employed, and, after a trial of one month, must be bound for five years; no more than one apprentice to one or two men, and no more than two apprentices in any one shop.

The Master Bakers' Association submitted the following proposals:—

That the hours of labour be fifty-four hours per week, and the hour of starting be left in the hands of the employer; that one apprentice be allowed to one man, two to three men, and so on in proportion; that no man receive less than £2 2s. per week; that jobbers receive 8s. per day. In all other respects the association agreed to the rules governing bakers as submitted.

The master bakers not members of the association objected to the rules relating to hours of labour and time of starting, apprentices, rates of wages, and to the dough-machine rule. They agree with the Master Bakers' Association's recommendations in regard to hours of labour and starting work, and the wages of jobbers. The rule that members of the union get preference of employment was objected to by both the associated and non-associated masters.

The Board recommended:—

(1.) As to Rule 48: (a.) That the hours of work be nine hours per day until the 1st day of November next, and thereafter eight hours per day. (b.) That the hour for starting work be not earlier than 4 a.m., except on Wednesday, Saturday, and the day immediately preceding any public holiday, when it may be an hour not earlier than 3 a.m. (c.) That, if the employers are not satisfied with the hour of starting as fixed by the preceding recommendation, the association may have that question reopened and reconsidered at any time after the 1st February, 1898. (2.) As to Rule 49: That this rule be agreed to as framed—viz., in any house where the dough-machines are used the dough-men may start one hour and thirty minutes sooner. (3.) As to Rules 50 and 51: These were agreed to by all parties.