

223. What effect would that have on the truckers : would there be less coal to truck?—If the miners gave them the coal and the truckers were able to do it it would have no effect ; but if the miners did not give them the coal the number of tubs run would be less, I suppose.

224. Could the miners give them the same amount of coal in less hours?—As I have already said, the miners could only give it to them by increased energy or shortening crib-time.

225. Do you think that the miners could, by shortening their crib and by increased energy, make up that half-hour?—I think they work pretty hard now, and I think they want the half-hour for crib.

226. What effect would the limiting of the hours and the decreasing of the output have upon the wages of the men on the surface?—I suppose they would not take less wages.

227. Supposing the Arbitration Court awarded them less wages for less time, would they like that?—Naturally, I should think the men would want the same pay.

228. Though they worked shorter hours?—I would, at any rate, if I were one of them.

229. Leaving wages out of the question, would the limiting of the time down below in coal-winning, and so on, of necessity limit also the work on the surface? Would the shorter hours worked down below not limit the time worked on the surface? In other words, is not the work on the surface dependent on the work down below?—Entirely.

230. Then, if the time worked down below is shortened, will that not shorten the work on the surface too?—I do not know ; it would certainly shorten the men's time of work. The time of the men on the surface goes with that of the men underground.

231. Then, if half an hour is cut off down below it is cut off also on the surface?—Yes, I take it that is so, unless the management give the men something else to do in the half-hour.

232. Is there anything you could suggest if the rope is not working and the machinery not going?—They might reduce the hands or give those men extra time at other work—labouring-work. Take men off the screens, for instance, and put them on to labouring-work. It might be done.

233. So far as the men are concerned, there would be no work for them to do in the shortened time?—There is always work to be done, but I do not think that men in a particular occupation would care about going off that and doing something else for half an hour to fill up the time.

234. Are many of the men working on day's wages down below?—It varies somewhat. I should think that fully a third to two-fifths of the men at Kaitangata are on day's wages ; the balance are on contract.

235. Have you any complaints from the men about the time they have to work underground?—No.

236. Do you know of any complaints in your district about the time the men have to work underground?—I have not had complaints from miners themselves.

237. You have had complaints from somebody else?—Yes ; not complaints in proper form, but one or two of the officials have spoken at different times about the hard work that has to be done, especially long hours and the difficult jobs.

238. Specially long hours?—Yes.

239. What do you mean by specially long hours?—Running a double shift without stopping, although only on occasions.

240. I am talking of the ordinary single shifts under the law as it stands : have you heard any complaints?—No.

241. Do you know of any desire to alter it?—I think nearly all miners are anxious to shorten the hours of labour, if it comes to that.

242. But is it your opinion that they desire to shorten the hours of labour and take less wages?—I have not heard any expression on that point.

243. They would like to have the hours of labour shortened and the wages kept as they are—that is only natural?—It is human nature.

244. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] How many men are employed in the Kaitangata Mine?—There were 368 on the pay-sheet when I made inquiries last week.

245. How many of them are getting coal at piecework?—A little over two hundred are getting coal on piecework.

246. Are all the men who are getting coal on piecework?—In deficient places they go on shift, driving headings, &c., under the award, and the men then go on day's wages.

247. How is the air in the Kaitangata Mine?—Very fair generally.

248. Is there never any occasion to stop on account of bad air?—I have never seen work stopped for bad air since I have been Inspector. The men have been drawn out of one or two small corners of the mine for safety, so as not to take any risks.

249. What effect do you think it has on a man's life to be working more than eight hours a day underground where the air is not very good—where explosives are used and coal-dust has to be inhaled?—I have never seen a miner work more than eight hours underground.

250. But there are men working eight hours and a half, according to your own statement?—Not actually working.

251. They are in the mine, all the same?—I know a man who is seventy-two years of age in one mine, and numbers of men over sixty.

252. They might live to be a hundred if they had not worked there at all?—Yes.

253. Do you know whether life-insurance companies charge miners an extra premium for working underground?—Yes, I believe they do ; but as an underground man myself I have always objected to that. I have always thought it wrong that they should penalise the miners.

254. Do they still do it?—I think so.

255. Do you know whether it has been the experience of actuaries and people who go into this question throughout the world that a miner's life—especially a coal-miner's—is much shorter than