

There are various unions in the country, and they are all working under different awards and agreements. We have no Miners' Federation.

5. Are the conditions not different in some coal-mines, as well as quartz-mines?—Of course, there is a slight difference, I believe, in the conditions in different coal-mines, but I think the conditions in quartz-mines are pretty much the same. A miner has the same danger in a great many instances, and, of course, his occupation is always unhealthy, particularly where dynamite is used, and nitro-glycerine explosives are used in all quartz-mines and rock mines.

6. Still, seeing that the Arbitration Court has been set up for the purpose of dealing with these matters, do you think it is fair, after agreements have been made, to petition the House to make alterations?—I said in my previous evidence that it was always the intention of the Inangahua miners to look to the Legislature for redress.

7. Would it not look as if the Arbitration Court had become obsolete if every one, after arrangements had been made by the Court, came to the Legislature to get amendments made?—It is not purely a local question; it is a national question. It affects the whole of the miners—quartz and gold—throughout the colony.

8. I am aware of that; but the Arbitration Court is set up to deal with all mines?—Yes, that is so. I admit that in some instances there might be reasons for the Court fixing different rates of pay in various parts of the colony; but I think the hours of labour should be uniform, because the occupation is unhealthy and dangerous in all parts of the country.

9. I thought that the Conciliation Boards and the Arbitration Court had made allowances for all that, and apparently they have?—No, not to the satisfaction of the great body of the workers.

10. *Mr. Lang.*] I would like to ask the witness one question. Are some mines not more unhealthy to work in than others?—Oh, most decidedly, of course—that is, if the ventilation is not what it should be. Some mines are not so well ventilated as others.

11. Then, would it not be more satisfactory to have the hours arranged by the Arbitration Court, which could make the necessary difference for different mines, according to the state of the air, and so forth, instead of having a fixed law for the whole colony?—I think the Legislature should deal with the matter, and not leave it to the Arbitration Court. I know that, as far as the North Island award affecting quartz-miners is concerned, the Court reduced the hours to six in that case for badly ventilated places and wet places; but I think that instead of leaving a matter of that kind to the Court it should be made a colonial question. The House should deal with it and fix the hours in the same way as the Court has done for that class of work, or for men engaged under those conditions—*i.e.*, in badly ventilated places and in wet ground.

12. Do you think that matter could be dealt with by an Act of Parliament as well as by the Court sitting and considering individual cases?—Much better, I think, because an Act of Parliament would apply to the whole colony, and the miners would be working under similar conditions all over the colony, which is as it should be. Of course, as far as deciding what is a wet place or a badly ventilated place is concerned, that, I suppose, will rest with the management of a mine, and perhaps some officials of the union, or possibly with the Inspector of Mines for the district.

WILLIAM DAWE examined. (No. 5.)

13. *The Chairman.*] What is your name?—William Dawe.

14. Where do you live?—At Brunnerton.

15. What are you?—A miner.

16. Do you belong to any association of miners?—The Brunner Union.

17. Are you an officer of that union?—No.

18. *Mr. Guinness.*] You are a member of the Grey Valley Coal-miners' Union?—Yes.

19. Has the question of working eight hours from bank to bank been discussed by the members of your union on several or any occasions?—I have not attended the meetings of the union just lately.

20. Do you know what the feeling of the miners is on the question?—Yes.

21. What is it?—That they should be relieved outside.

22. You do not understand me. I want to know what the feeling of the miners is with regard to having legislation passed making the day's work count from the time you leave the surface till you come out at the surface again?—Eight hours from bank to bank.

23. Are they in favour of that or against it?—They are in favour of it.

24. How long have you been employed as a coal-miner?—For twenty-five or twenty-six years.

25. Where?—At Brunner principally.

26. What is the custom with regard to changing shifts in coal-mines: where do the miners change?—No particular place in the Brunner Mine.

27. If the Bill that I have brought in this session, having for its object to make the hours of work eight hours from bank to bank, is passed in Parliament, will it have any effect in the way of increasing the cost of production, in your opinion?—No, I do not think so.

28. Who do you consider is the person that a miner going off has to inform of any danger or risk at the face that he is leaving?—It is the duty of the deputy to inform a miner coming on what his place is like. If there is anything wrong a miner going off should acquaint the deputy of it. It is the deputy's place to go and see that the place is right before the relieving party goes in.

29. If a miner going off from a place knows of some risk or likelihood of accident, is it his duty to inform the miner who is going on to work at that place, or is it his duty to inform the deputy?—It is not the miner's duty to inform his mate, because he may not see him. It is the deputy's duty to inform the man going on whether the place is dangerous or otherwise. It is the duty of the miner going off to inform the deputy if anything is wrong; of course, if he saw his relieving mate he might inform him.