

186. Do you think that it is healthy for a man, working in a mine where gelatine and dynamite are used, to inhale the fumes of these explosives?—He does not work very much in gelatine and dynamite. The places are always cleared before he goes into them. The ventilation clears the fumes out.

187. Is that so in every case?—In all well-conducted mines it is. We have Inspectors to see that the ventilation is right, and they are very particular.

188. If miners from other districts said that the occupation was unhealthy, would you believe them?—No, I would not.

189. How many men do you employ at your mine?—Forty-eight at Lovell's Flat.

190. Are they working on day-labour or on piecework?—On piecework; but we have a certain number of day-labour men on.

191. Previous to the 1891 Act coming into force what hours did the men work?—They used to work eight hours at the face; we used to get a full eight hours' work.

192. If the men were on piecework at the face, would it make any difference to you whether they worked six or eight hours a day?—It would make a difference to us to this extent: if only six hours were worked we would have to put so-many more men on to get the same quantity of coal, and, when we got the same quantity of coal, on account of the hours being shortened we could not get that coal up the shaft.

193. Is it not a fact that coal-miners generally, previous to the Act coming into force, never worked longer than seven hours at the face in most of the mines in the colony?—If you take off their "smoko" they work about seven hours and a half a day, I suppose. They are in the habit of having a smoke at any time they like. They were at the face eight hours.

194. *Mr. Guinness.*] Do you work your mine by means of a shaft or a tunnel?—A shaft.

195. What is the depth of that shaft?—461 ft.

196. What is the length of your drives?—They vary up to half a mile.

197. Have you got any drive half a mile in length?—Yes. They are from a few chains to half a mile long, but, of course, they are extending every day.

198. What do the pieceworkers at your mine average per day?—About 10s.

199. Do they work full time?—For the last three years we have worked about five days a week. We have worked too much for them, in fact.

200. What do you pay the truckers?—Their pay varies from 6s. 6d. to 8s., according to age and ability.

201. What is your output for eight hours?—About 80 tons during the last week or two. We have gone up to 100.

202. Is that your maximum?—Yes, 100 tons. The output has fallen off this last week or two.

203. You told Mr. Allen that if the Bill became law, after deducting crib-time, "smoko" time, and the time occupied in travelling, the actual time worked at the face would be only five hours and fifty minutes a day—that is what you made it, I think?—The Bill would reduce the time to six hours a day, actual working-time.

204. What time do the men take to go down the shaft?—About twenty minutes.

205. And then from the shaft to the face?—That takes somewhere about ten minutes.

206. That is, it takes them half an hour to get to the work?—Yes.

207. And another half-hour to get back?—Yes.

208. Then, you said—so I understood—that an hour and ten minutes were taken up by crib-time and "smoko"?—Yes; about forty minutes for crib, and we generally reckon from ten minutes to a quarter of an hour for "smoko" in the morning, and the same in the afternoon.

209. That is about thirty minutes for smoking and forty minutes for crib?—Yes.

210. That is about seventy minutes?—Yes.

211. So that only five hours and fifty minutes is left out of the eight hours?—Yes, coal-getting.

212. Is the Act of last session being given effect to in your mine?—Not altogether.

213. Why?—On account of the men themselves. They had no wish to alter the rates of pay they were getting.

214. Did you intimate to the men that if they took advantage of the Act their rates would be decreased?—Yes.

215. You told them what the consequences would be if they claimed to work under that Act?—We told them this: that if we had to reduce the hours of labour we would want to reduce the rate of pay accordingly.

216. And they said that sooner than do that they would keep on under the old system?—Yes. I may say that at the present time we have a reference in, and the men are claiming a rise equal to from 85 to 90 per cent. on their present wages.

217. Brown coal is the only coal produced at Lovell's Flat?—Yes.

218. Is it principally supplied to Dunedin?—No; principally to the country round. Dunedin takes about one-fourth.

219. *The Chairman.*] Do you not think it would be better to reduce the crib and "smoko" time, and let the men out of the mine earlier? Is there any necessity for wasting so much time as thirty or forty minutes a day underground?—It depends on the men. I do not think it would be possible for us to get them to alter the custom.

220. Do you think they would not take less than forty minutes for lunch and less than thirty minutes for "smoko" in order to get up into the fresh air earlier?—No, I do not think they would take less. They very often smoke down in the mine. We do not object to that, if they work hard while they are working.

221. Have you yourself got a mine-manager's certificate?—No.