

2. The horses would be standing idle?—Yes.
3. The Bill alters the definition of a miner?—Yes.
4. Under this altered definition would your men driving horses be included as miners?—I understand that any man going below the ground would be taken as a miner.
5. Then, what would the Bill make such a man's hours of labour?—In our district, I think, it would reduce the hours of labour to about seven.
6. Would the Bill make the hours eight from bank to bank?—Yes, including meal-time, and travelling, and "smoko."
7. Then, could the driver remain another hour or half-hour to take the stuff out if the Bill were passed?—It seems to me that it would be illegal, unless overtime were provided for. Another point I might draw attention to is this: It seems to me that to put the clause proposed into the Mining Act would be making a condition for the whole colony where the circumstances of the mines are very different. Another point I might refer to is this: All the Otago coals are coals that will not store. All the mines are working on a daily-supply business. You may be running your mine to its utmost limit for a week, and then working only half-time during the next week, owing to the intermittent demand for the coal. No coal is hauled until it is practically known where it is going to—where the market is. The only storage provided by any of the mines that I know of, even Kaitangata, is the railway-trucks. If your orders are a little slack you store a few trucks of coal, and that is all you can do. We cannot do like they do at Westport—*i.e.*, store hundreds and thousands of tons here and there to meet the demand. The result works out in this way: You have a rush on your mine for a few days, then the orders drop off and the men have a slack time. So that even if the men were working eight hours at the face a day they would not be working forty-eight hours a week, or anything like it. They might have two busy days and the next day an off-day. That fact seems to me to be very much against the idea of shortening the hours too much. It is something like the case of a farmer. He has to work hard at, say, harvest-time to make up for the slack time during the winter. Another point is this: It may appear as if the evidence that I have given is of small moment because my own colliery is small. But the same principles apply to our large mines, like Kaitangata, where there are hundreds of men employed. The owners would simply lose in the output, and they would lose the time of all the men.

8. *Mr. Lang.*] I understood you to say that the conditions in the mines are different in different parts of the colony, and to say something to the effect that it was not wise to have a hard-and-fast rule for some of the mines. What I want to ask you is this: Would it not be more satisfactory to have matters, such as the hours of labour, dealt with by the Arbitration Court instead of by the Legislature?—Decidedly. I think the members of the Arbitration Court become in a short time practically experts in judging these matters. They can take into consideration the various conditions in the different cases. For instance, in one mine the men would lose half an hour or three-quarters of an hour in travelling, but at another mine they would be at the face in two or three minutes. I think it would be better if the Arbitration Court dealt with these matters rather than make a general law for the whole of the colony.

ALLAN McINTOSH examined. (No. 9.)

[Mr. McIntosh's evidence appears on page 54.]

JOSEPH HOLLOWES examined. (No. 10.)

9. *The Chairman.*] What is your name?—Joseph Hollowes.
10. Where do you live?—At Kaitangata.
11. What is your occupation?—I am secretary to the Coal-miners' Union of Otago.
12. You have read the Bill now before us?—Yes.
13. What would be the effect of the Bill, if passed, on the industry, speaking generally?—That is rather a broad question.
14. I will put it in another way. What are the hours of labour at the present time at Kaitangata Mine?—Seven hours at the face—that is, at the Kaitangata and Castle Hill Mines.
15. Would this Bill reduce your hours of labour at the face?—Yes.
16. By how much would it reduce them?—By half an hour a day. The travelling-time allowed now is half an hour each way.
17. Do you actually occupy half an hour in travelling each way?—That is done to cover places that are a considerable distance in.
18. What becomes of the men who have not to travel as far as the others: do they have to wait and not be allowed to commence work?—I would not be positive of the actual time taken to travel to the nearest place. As far as I could gather, the time taken ranges from twenty minutes to half an hour.
19. Will you go on to explain, then, how the Bill would reduce the hours of labour at the face by half an hour?—The time-allowance that I am speaking of is the one given now at Kaitangata. Take the early shift: The men leave the surface at 7 o'clock. They have half an hour for crib or meal-time—at 11, I think—and leave their work at 3.
20. When do they get to the surface?—At half-past 3.
21. Between 7 and half-past 3 the men are working, excepting travelling and crib time?—Yes.
22. That is eight hours and a half?—Yes.
23. Then, allowing half an hour for crib-time and half an hour for travelling each way, the time worked at the face is seven hours?—Yes, at the Kaitangata and Castle Hill Mines.
24. Do those who are working at the nearest faces do more actual work in the eight hours and a half underground than those at the distant places?—I would not be positive as to