

whether they wait their time before starting or not. I got it from the manager himself that the actual working-time at the face was seven hours. I might explain that there is another mine, as to which we have a separate understanding. I refer to the old mine where the explosion occurred some years ago. The company have got into this mine again, and we have made a separate agreement—or, rather, understanding—with reference to that part, that a quarter of an hour should be allowed for travelling each way.

25. What are the hours of labour there?—They are reduced by half an hour.

26. So that instead of being eight hours and a half underground?—They work seven hours and a half. They work half an hour more than the others.

27. Are there any more mines, to your knowledge, that work the seven hours and a half at the face?—I could not speak positively on that point.

28. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Do you work in the Kaitangata Mine?—No; I am the general secretary to the Miners' Union.

29. Are you the secretary for all the coal-miners' associations in Otago?—For all the branches comprising the Otago Coal-miners' Union.

30. Do you know the Walton Park Mine?—Yes.

31. In a general way, what sort of a colliery do you consider the Walton Park Mine as regards the safety of the men?—Black damp is general throughout the district. Not only is it met with at the Walton Park Mine, but in other mines in the district.

32. The Green Island district?—Yes. White damp also exists there.

33. If it had been given in evidence that the men are in the habit of smoking in the Walton Park and Jubilee Mines, would you consider that a safe practice?—Smoking in mines is not prohibited, except where firedamp exists or where safety-lamps are used.

34. From your knowledge of the Green Island coal district, where black damp is prevalent, would you say that it was a safe practice?—Oh, yes.

35. Do you consider it conducive to the men's health that there should be smoking in a mine?—I think so, where there is black damp.

36. What about white damp?—It is just the same in that respect.

37. Is Walton Park a wet mine?—No; not as far as my knowledge goes. I worked there myself some time ago, and it was not wet then.

38. Do the men suffer from rheumatics there?—No; they only get wet from perspiration.

39. There is no pumping-engine?—No.

40. Do you consider eight hours and a half too long or too short for the men to work in the Walton Park Mine?—I consider it is too long a time in any mine.

41. I refer to this particular case. You say that it is a healthy mine—the air is good and the mine dry?—I do not know whether I should specialise any mine. I myself consider that six hours is ample for any miner to work at the face.

42. What has been your experience as to the general effect on a coal-miner's health of his working long hours underground?—It varies; some are able to stand it better than others.

43. But in a general way?—The effect is bad.

44. In what respect?—The men are subject to impure air, black damp, white damp, and other noxious effluvia; and these, with the laborious underground work and the heavy respiration, are conducive to bad health.

45. Do coal-miners generally, to your knowledge, suffer from lung-complaints more than the ordinary run of people?—I know a great number that do suffer from lung-complaints.

46. Do you know of any medical officer living in Wellington who has been connected with any coal-mine in the colony whom we could examine on this question?—No, I do not know of any.

47. Suppose that at the Walton Park or the Jubilee Mine a reduction of half an hour was made in the day's work, could they maintain the same output by increasing the number of men with the present haulage systems there?—Most emphatically, yes.

48. Could they do the same at Kaitangata?—Yes.

49. Do you know the Allandale Mine?—Yes.

50. Could the same thing be done there?—Yes, I think so.

51. Do you know the Denniston Mine, Coalbrookdale?—Yes.

52. Do you think they could maintain their output there by increasing the number of men employed with the present haulage system?—It is some two years and a half since I left Denniston, but I should say they could have done so when I was there.

53. But suppose their output now is no greater than it was then, or even less?—If they have the same facilities for hauling coal as they had when I was there I should say Yes.

54. How many shifts do they work?—One.

55. Were you ever there when they worked the two?—Yes, but only for a short period.

56. Have you ever worked at Granity?—No.

57. Where did they change shifts at Denniston when the two were working?—The men usually met at the mouth of the mine.

58. Were you prevented from going into the mine unless the deputies ordered you to go?—Yes.

59. Suppose that you had to wait an hour or two while the mine was being examined by the deputies or by some one else responsible, who would suffer the loss—the management or the men?—I think they both would; but the men would certainly get nothing.

60. The men on piecework?—Yes.

61. When you were at Denniston, for how long did they stop the haulage for the shifts to go on and come off?—The men would be out on the travelling-roads somewhere.

62. The haulage was never stopped for the changing of shifts?—Some years ago, when the two shifts were working, they had a stoppage of half an hour. That would be eleven or twelve years ago.