

833. Have you an engine at your mine?—Yes.

834. Supposing you had an accident to your machinery, or to the engine, or anything else, and the men were delayed for an hour or two hours by the accident, would you pay them a full day's wages?—Oh yes, because they could continue on.

835. Take the case of a day-wages man: Suppose an accident took place in the morning and was of such a nature that you could not send the man down for that day—that he might go home if he liked—would you pay him for that day?—No.

836. I understand that if a wages-man is delayed for a few hours he is paid a full day's wages, and if he is delayed for a whole day he is not paid. But if a man working on piece is delayed and not able to get at his work, is that his loss?—Yes, he cannot make that up.

837. He loses that for all time?—Yes. I might mention that, as a rule, the colliers are not regularly employed themselves, and that reduces the working-time from six days a week to probably four.

838. Could you tell me approximately the average number of days per week that are worked by a pieceworker in a coal-mine, and also by a wages-man?—As I remarked before, we have been regularly employed for the last twelve months; but it is provided in the award that during the six winter months the men are to have a half-holiday on each second Saturday—the day after they are paid. In the summer months—the slack time—the men have a full holiday after they are paid.

839. According to that, at a mine working full time for the whole year, each man would work five days and three-quarters per week on an average: is that correct?—No.

840. It would not be so much?—No.

841. Would it be five days per week on an average for the year?—There are 19½ holidays during the year under the Arbitration Court award.

842. How much other time would a miner lose apart from the holidays?—There are eight compulsory holidays in the year, according to the Act, and there are other incidental holidays, such as Coronation Day.

843. How many holidays a year would those amount to in addition to the compulsory ones: I merely want to know the approximate number?—There would be somewhere about eight, any way.

844. On how many other days would the men be off work through accident to the machinery, or any other such cause?—Such a thing as that has not occurred with me as far as I am aware. I cannot take my memory back to the time when there has been a stoppage through the machinery giving way.

845. Then, there would be thirty-six days each year for which the men would get no pay?—Yes; and the same thing would apply to the employers, for we get no pay either.

846. What I want to get at is the number of days the men are off work during the year, because statements are often made to the effect that miners receive very high wages; but when you work it out you find that a miner's pay is not such a great amount?—I may say that I am losing my trade; there are 19½ holidays under the award, and my trade is going away. I am not able to supply the orders. My haulage-power is taxed to its limit, and as soon as a holiday comes a day's production is lost. That is a loss to me.

847. *The Chairman.*] Did you not say you could increase that haulage-power by putting in steam instead of using horses?—Yes, I could increase it, and—

848. How much would it cost to put that steam-power in? You said it would cost £300 or £400, but you afterwards corrected that?—My estimate here, in the first place, was all wrong. To avoid having generating-power down below, I would have to put a boiler on the surface, and send the steam down the shaft to an engine working below. The boiler alone would cost £500.

849. What would the total cost be?—About £800.

850. If you did that you would be able to haul as much as you liked?—If I did that I would increase the output considerably.

851. In Judge Martin's award what were the actual hours of working set down as?—Eight hours' actual work at the face.

852. *Mr. Bennet.*] Inclusive or exclusive of crib-time?—Crib-time is not mentioned at all in the award.

853. *Mr. Guinness.*] The terms of the award are given in this book which I have here, and the hours are stated as eight, exclusive of meal-time [book handed to witness]?—Yes, that is so; I made a mistake.

854. *Hon. Mr. McGowan.*] Are you aware of any mine at which they are working absolutely according to the award—viz., eight hours' actual working-time?—We are not actually standing there, and do not know.

FRIDAY, 1ST AUGUST, 1902.

SMITH LAUGHTON PATRICK FREE examined. (No. 14.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your name?—Smith Laughton Patrick Free.

2. Where do you live?—At Reefton.

3. What is your occupation?—My occupation primarily is that of a solicitor, but I am also the representative of several mining companies. I am an attorney for the Consolidated Goldfields of New Zealand, the Progress Mines of New Zealand, the Welcome Gold-mining Company, and the Humphrey Hydraulic Sluicing Company. I am also a director of the Big River Gold-mining Company and the Kirwan's Reward Gold-mining Company; and a shareholder in other mining companies. I am also the representative in New Zealand—the sole attorney—for David Ziman, who is largely interested in mining.