

28. *Hon. Mr. McGowan.*] What are the actual working-hours at the face in the Waikato coal-mines—not counting bank to bank, but the actual working-hours?—About eight hours is the time.

29. For all the men?—Yes, down below.

30. I mean exclusive of the time taken up for crib. Do they work eight hours from the time they leave the bank till they get up again? They are eight hours from bank to bank?—Yes.

31. How much is deducted from that for crib-time?—When on their own contracts they will sometimes take only fifteen minutes.

32. Take the wages-men first: For wages-men how much is deducted for crib-time?—Half an hour is the usual time.

33. How much is taken from the time of going from the bank to the work and coming back to the bank?—They generally take about a quarter of an hour one way and a quarter the other way.

34. A quarter each way?—Yes.

35. That leaves seven hours at the face in the case of coal-mines?—Yes.

36. Let us now deal with quartz-mines: Is the same rule in force in quartz-mines—I mean under wages? What is the time from bank to bank in a quartz-mine where the men are on wages?—Eight hours.

37. What is the usual time allowed for crib in a quartz-mine?—Half an hour.

38. Is it universally half an hour?—Men on wages will sometimes take longer, but half an hour is the recognised time.

39. What is the time usually taken from the poppet-heads to the works, as far as the wages-men are concerned?—They are supposed to relieve their mates, so they must work eight hours.

40. They are eight hours from bank to bank in a coal-mine?—Yes.

41. Is the time more than eight hours in a quartz-mine?—They are supposed to relieve each other in the face, so it must be more than that.

42. At that rate they would require to be actually more than eight hours from bank to bank?—Yes.

43. What would be the average time from going down the shaft—take the ordinary man?—You cannot very well get away from the men relieving each other at the face.

44. What I want to get at is the time from the poppet-head to the work?—It will be about eight hours and a half.

45. That is about half an hour going backward and forward?—Yes.

46. It may be more sometimes, or less?—Yes.

47. The wages-men get half an hour for crib?—Yes.

48. With regard to contractors, where the men are doing work by contract, do they work the same hours?—Yes.

49. If the hours were shortened and the meal-time was taken out, what effect would that have on the contractors?—I do not understand your question.

50. At present a man is supposed to work eight hours, but actually he is working eight hours and a half, because he is bound to be there in time to go down to relieve his mates at the face. If that time was shortened by half an hour, what result would it have on contracting?—A man could not do as much in seven hours and a half as he would do in eight.

51. Has any complaint been made to you?—I have heard no expression in the matter of hours at all.

52. Was any complaint made when the Bill was passed last year? I think some of the miners were aware of the provisions of the Bill as it originally passed, and there was an amendment introduced in the Upper House which excepted the meal-time?—I did not hear of any complaint.

53. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] I did not hear the witness's leading evidence when coal-mines were referred to. I would like to know the length of haulage in the mines in the Auckland District that he referred to—the longest?—I should not say it was very extensive, not more than half a mile or so.

54. What sort of explosives do they use in the Auckland quartz-mines?—Gelignite, as a rule.

55. How far have the men to go to their work in the Waihi Mine: what distance have some of them to go to the face from the entrance of the mine?—In the case of the Waihi and others it would not be more than quarter of a mile or thereabouts.

56. Are there any mines where the distance is more than that?—In one or two it might be a little more, but not much.

57. How is the ventilation in those mines?—Fairly good.

58. How deep are they?—They vary; but it all depends where it is from: if it is from the top of the hill downwards—

59. I mean from where they enter the mine to the lowest level?—About 600 ft. or 700 ft.

60. What effect do you think dynamite-fumes and the usual dust there is in a mine would have on a man's health?—You cannot get away from the fact that they are not good for anybody. They are injurious to a man's health, no matter what is done.

61. You have a good idea of the average distance the men live from the entrance to the mine?—Yes.

62. How long would it take them on an average to get to their houses and back?—They would not be more than about a mile away at the outside.

63. That would take the men another quarter of an hour each way?—Yes; but a mile is the extreme distance.

64. Practically some of them would have to be attending to their work for nine hours a day, including the time between leaving their homes and getting to their work and going back again?—Yes, I should say so.