

to 17s. 6d.?—It does not leave much for taking it to Auckland. It depends upon the market to a great extent.

162. But free on board ship; it does not matter about the competition?—I could not tell you.

163. Are you aware that the men who hew the coal, and probably the truckers also, get less than they did ten or twelve years ago?—I could not tell you that.

164. With regard to the definition of "miner": you know the mining laws of this colony intimately. Do you know of any mining law in which there is a definition of "miner" except this particular clause that was passed last year?—I should certainly not call a boy going into a mine to truck a "miner."

165. Excepting in this clause there is no general definition in any law of the colony, is there?—That is where I think the objection comes in. In order to be a miner a man must learn his business exactly the same as in any other business.

166. You reckon that overtime would have to be paid to the deputy or a fireman to carry out his work. Is it not a fact that they get better wages than the ordinary wages paid in the mine—they get special pay for performing special duty?—They get a little more pay.

167. You said in answer to Mr. Allen that the deputy and the fireman would have to work overtime. Suppose you reduce the time that the miners work by fifteen minutes, would they get any more pay than now?—They would be entitled to more.

168. Because you reduce the time?—You do not reduce the time, because the deputies have to be in the mine in some instances an hour, and in some more, before the men enter.

169. Suppose that the men are working, as you say, an hour and a half less—I say fifteen minutes less—do you think the deputy would have to be paid any more than he is at present because the time the men would be at work would be less?—Most undoubtedly he would. He would claim overtime for more than eight hours' work.

170. Do you think he would want to be paid more than at present?—Yes; he would want certain overtime.

171. Why?—For the simple reason that eight hours would be defined by legislation, and he would say, "I am entitled to overtime."

172. But is he not paid now?—Not for overtime. He gets a certain wage.

173. Would that overtime that he would want to be paid amount, with his wages, to more than he is getting now?—I think so.

174. Why?—You can pass as much legislation as you have a mind to, but the miners themselves will want as much wages if you make their hours an hour less, and so will the deputy, because the deputy is a man who has to be in the mine for a long time, and he is entitled to more wages than an actual miner. If the eight hours a day applied to other men the deputy would require to be paid overtime.

175. You said that labour legislation was shortening the hours of labour and frightening capital out of the colony?—I said, as far as gold-mining was concerned, if you shorten the hours of labour you cannot put the extra cost of production on to any other people. You have to depend entirely upon the price you get for your gold. It affects the gold-mining industry more than any other industry you have got.

176. Your opinion is that this kind of legislation has the effect of driving money out of the colony?—I can speak from what I am told by people I was connected with for some years in London—that this labour legislation has the effect in the London market of keeping capital from the colony.

177. Do you not think that it is as important to every miner in the colony that the mines should be kept fully at work, and the investment of capital in mining should be encouraged as much as possible?—Yes.

178. Do you not think the miners are as much interested in that phase of the question as any mining speculator?—The miner generally wants as much money as he can get—

179. So does the investor. You are not aware of any case in which the miners or the miners' union have tried to close any mine, are you?—I do not know of that.

180. Are you aware of any cases in which their actions have had a tendency to do so?—The miners' unions, I can tell you, are pretty hard on some of the mines. They want to force the companies to work when they have not the money to work with.

181. But you cannot cite any case in which their actions have tended to close mines?—They tend that way, at any rate.

182. You say that it is not advisable to make a hard-and-fast rule with regard to eight hours from bank to bank?—I think it would do an injury to the colony to make a hard-and-fast rule when we have the Arbitration Court. It ought to decide about the hours of labour and the wages in every mine, because mines are so different from one another.

183. Do you think this proposal makes a hard-and-fast rule?—Yes.

184. How?—It makes it a hard-and-fast rule that any man who goes into a mine is entitled to work only eight hours, and be paid overtime if he works more.

185. In regard to the hewing-rate for coal, is it not left to the Arbitration Court, even if this becomes law, to fix the hewing-rate and trucking-rate?—I think it will be a hard job for the Arbitration Court to attempt to put down wages. The men will want some other legislation to keep them up.

186. The Arbitration Court has reduced the miners' wages on more than one occasion?—Not in our district.

187. There is no hard-and-fast rule made as far as the Arbitration Court is concerned, is there?—It is a hard-and-fast rule. It is taking power out of the Arbitration Court's hands that ought to be there.

188. This proposal would take away the power by fixing an eight-hours day?—Yes.

189. But the power to fix the wages for that day would still be in the hands of the Court?—Yes, but it is increasing the wages, for the simple reason that you cannot get the wages down.

190. That is a matter for future decision?—That is my experience.

191. *The Chairman.*] You say that the Arbitration Court will not reduce wages?—I do not believe it will.