

Mr. ROBERT MAYO CATLIN, who was next called, said he was mining engineer of the Jupiter, West Simmer, Simmer and Jack West, Simmer and Jack East, and Knight's Deep. He arrived in Johannesburg on the 9th November a year ago. Before that he was in America, and had been in mining business since 1874. He had been connected with various mines in America—the Grand Prize, Navajo, Belleisle, North Belleisle, Commonwealth, and others. These were gold and silver mines.

*Chairman.*

On which point will you be able to speak to the Commission?—Most particularly upon the wages paid to employees.

Have you formulated any statement or statistics?—No, I have not. I have not gone into the matter that has been so fully canvassed here. I may say I have read the testimony of most of the witnesses, and it would be unnecessary to occupy your time repeating the same. I have been informed that there was considerable criticism made upon the wages, or the money which we allowed our employees to obtain, particularly in relation to the so-called bonus system.

What do you call the bonus system?—We pay our miners in addition to their regular wage, a bonus on a certain rate for every foot sunk above a certain distance. When I came here I was not familiar with the native labour, and adopted the system of bonus then in vogue, but since that time I have twice reduced the rate. I would, for illustration, take the most extreme case where we have paid the greatest amount of bonus. Last month, in the Catlin Shaft, we made 142 feet in the month by hand, and the same distance in the Howard Shaft on the Simmer and Jack West. The bonus amounted to £483, that is in addition to the wages of the miners, and I have claimed, and believe, and I think can demonstrate, that this system enables us to do more work at a less price than any other system that I know of. I believe it would be admitted by everyone, and in fact the record of the Rand and the world shows that, working only by daily wage without bonuses, a progress of 80 feet in one month has rarely been accomplished. For argument's sake, assume that the Catlin Shaft last month had paid no bonus, but had paid a daily wage, and had been able thereby to sink 80 feet, the result would have been we would have saved the bonus which we paid, and proportionately down through the different accounts, amounting to £829. As a result, we would have had 80 feet of shaft sunk at a cost of £24 1s. 1d. per foot. As a matter of fact we obtained 142 feet of shaft at a cost of £19 7s. 10d. per foot, resulting in a saving to us of £289 1s. 6d., besides giving us 62 feet more of shaft. Therefore I claim that the bonus system, which has been so much condemned in many quarters, is by long odds, the cheapest system in vogue. I take this instance as an extreme case. It is the largest bonus we have ever paid.

*Mr. Smit.*

How are these bonuses paid—per man per foot, or do the men divide the sections?—All the men participating in the work participate in the bonus.

Kaffirs also?—No, white men; and it is divided among them in proportion to the burden they bear, so to speak—the work they have done.

*Mr. Hugo.*

Not according to the number?—No, not according to the number. The miner below who directs the work of the kaffirs receives the most, while those of lesser importance receive proportionately.

*Mr. Smit.*

Now, what proportion of the total working costs of the mine do these wages

make, together with the bonus?—I give the average now of nine shafts—the cost of white labour averages 27·43 per cent., and of native labour 33 per cent.

Which percentage of the total working expenses of the mine is represented in paying bonuses to white men?—All the work we do in the mine is sinking shafts; we do no stopes, we are not yet on the reef, and these figures cover the entire cost. The percentage is as I said, 27½ and 33. The timber and the framing, 15 35-100ths per cent.; lubricants, 56-100ths per cent.; fuel, 4 69-100ths; general stores, 7 48-100ths; maintenance 1 15-100ths; office expenses, London office, and so on, 5 per cent.

What do you mean by fuel?—Coal.

As it is put down in the mines, including carriage from the pit's mouth?—Yes, including everything until put into the boiler.

Mr. Brochon.

You have said nothing about dynamite?—Explosives 5½ per cent.

Mr. Hugo.

What is the real objection raised to the bonus system you introduced?—I don't claim to have introduced it. I work it. It is an old system, and used all over the world.

Well, what is the real objection?—The objection I have heard is that it seemed an anomaly that an ignorant miner should be able to receive £75, £80, or £100 for one month's work. But my object is to get the shafts down as rapidly, and at the cheapest possible cost; and I do not care whether I have to pay an ignorant man or an educated man. I believe I work for the interest of my shareholders, and on this system would gladly pay a man £200.

Mr. Schmitz-Dumont.

You say that you have a Catlin shaft, in which you sank 142 feet in one month. How many working days did they work?—About 24.

That is sinking at the rate of 6 feet a day. Do you think that the work done at such a rate would be safe in future?—I do, and I invite inspection.

What is the distance between bearers, from 80 to 100 feet?—72 feet or less in most cases.

Of course that depends on the speed at which you want to haul?—What depends?

Say, for instance, you want to haul at 3,000 feet per minute.—Not at present. Later on perhaps.

You have not calculated that?—Yes. Our winding engines will be capable of working at that rate.

You think that the timbering would be sufficient?—Yes. We are timbering very securely, because we realise that these shafts are to be the highways for enormous traffic at high speed, and our timber is far in excess of the strength required.

Mr. Brakham.

Can you tell us how many men were employed last month in sinking the shaft?—I understand you to mean white men. There is only one white man at the bottom of the shaft, and connected with the sinking of the shaft 12 white men.

In three shifts, I suppose?—Yes, per day of 24 hours.

I suppose the kaffirs clean the shaft after blasting?—Yes.

Twelve men then divide the bonus of £483?—Yes.

That is £40 each?—Yes.

What is their average pay per month?—£1 per shift.

That would be about £24. In other words, these men have drawn about £66 per head. I have heard that in some of these deep level shafts £150 has been paid per

head?—Each man does not get the same in the division. The white man in charge at the bottom being in the greatest danger receives the greatest amount.

What would he receive from this?—I cannot say from memory, but over £100.

Do you not think that is very large pay?—No; if I can increase my sinking 62<sup>Ex</sup> feet they can earn it. I believe that the progress of 80 feet in a 25 feet by 6 feet shaft is far above the average, and not long ago it was considered a record. If we assume that shaft has gone down 80 feet, and we pay the required wage and no bonus, it would have cost us £24 ls. 1d. per foot, and, as a matter of fact, it only cost £19 7s. 10d. per foot, and so it does not matter to me whether a man earns £100 or £200.

You say the cost per foot is less. But if you had only sunk 80 feet it would have been less.—True, I take out the bonus and the cost of fuel, stores, lubricants, and I have also taken out the maintenance, although that is hardly fair.

But yet, surely, although the price per foot would be a large one, your expenditure under that would be less; therefore, I don't see how you arrive at the saving of £289?—If I save 62 feet of timbering I save 62 times that number of pounds, shillings and pence, and so on through the list.

Do you consider that with contract work you could achieve the same result?—I consider I could not. I have never been able to do it. I do not know that the men are the only men in the world who can do this, but I do know, so far as my information goes, no other men ever have done it.

Of course the speed of sinking the shaft very considerably affects the price; <sup>Cost</sup> unless there are particular difficulties with regard to the ground, the price does not seem very cheap?—Bear in mind these shafts are not small ones, they are the largest sized shafts on the Rand.

I know a shaft of similar dimensions on the West Rand. It has been sunk, everything included, for £15 per foot by contract work, and the speed was 90 feet a month; of course the speed was less, but the price compares very favourably with both instances you give?—I quite believe that can be done, and we could do it. Of course, should the ground get more favourable, we could reduce that price very materially.

Well, the main point is this, you establish the fact that it is advantageous to pay your men £100, or even more, per month?—If they earn it I feel justified in paying £150 or £200.

On that point I daresay opinions are divided. The 27½ per cent. for white labour includes the bonus?—Yes, and the manager's salary.

And yet the kaffir native wage comes to 33 per cent.?—Yes.

Now if in sinking a shaft 12 white men are employed, you have a certain number of white men on the surface. Can you tell me how many men there are?—Twelve altogether—nine outside and three in the shaft.

And how many kaffirs?—It depends on circumstances how many we can get out. We sometimes have 45 on the shift.

How much do these kaffirs working in the shaft get a day?—Our black labour average in that shaft only comes to 2s. 7d. and a fraction.

Mr. Brochon.

Do these white men working in the shaft include carpenters, who put in the frame of the timbers?—The carpenters who frame the timbers are charged in the timbering.

Yes, but they are working in the shaft?—The timbers are framed by men who do nothing else.

So you have not only three men in the shaft; you have more?—We have the timbering men up in the shaft above.

You gave an illustration, which was a very exceptional one, of a man drawing £140 to £150 a month in the shaft?—Then I only gave the illustration because I thought it would be more in my favour.

What do you reckon the average sinking will be in your shaft?—I cannot say, off-hand. We have some very bad ones, but I think the average will be up to 80 feet or 90 feet a month.

You have nine shafts and 12 men for each shaft. That will make 108 white men. What is the average salary these 108 white men make?—There are certain shafts that make no bonus at all, and there are certain others that do make a bonus, and the average would depend entirely on the average footage. I have not the figures, but if you desire it I will send them to you.

The average salary would not be £100?—No, it would be far below £50. The peril is not so much from the ground; we have one or two shafts in which the ground is very good, but the progress is nominal owing to a great influx of water.

Mr. Brakhan.

Can you tell us what the average pay for six months would be of the man who might draw in one month £100?—It would depend entirely on the progress his shaft made.

His salary is bound to vary, hardness of rock might prevent him doing much one month, and it would be well to know what his average would be for six months?—I would not like to state it off-hand, but I will send you the figures.

SIMMER AND JACK EAST, LIMITED.

Statement of Average Wages earned by men working on the Shaft, including the bonus paid, for 12 months to 31st May, 1897.

					£	s.	d.
1896.							
June	...	...	...	...	37	0	0
July	...	...	...	...	61	8	7
August	...	...	...	...	60	14	3
September	...	...	...	...	54	18	9
October	...	...	...	...	39	10	7
November	...	...	...	...	46	8	2
December	...	...	...	...	48	3	3
1897.							
January	...	...	...	...	52	11	9
February	...	...	...	...	43	18	1
March	...	...	...	...	35	15	7
April	...	...	...	...	48	8	5
May	...	...	...	...	50	14	3
					£579	11	8
Average wage for the 12 months	...	...	...	...	£48	5	11

KNIGHTS DEEP, LIMITED.

Statement of Average Wages earned by men working on the shaft, including the bonus paid, for 12 months to 31st May, 1897.

					£	s.	d.
1896.							
June	...	...	...	...	31	2	8
July	...	...	...	...	28	10	0
August	...	...	...	...	35	0	0
September	...	...	...	...	33	5	6
October	...	...	...	...	34	13	5
November	...	...	...	...	31	9	3
December	...	...	...	...	29	0	6