

119. And any one completing the work with the plant has two-thirds of the original value?—That is exactly what we estimate it at.

120. You brother works with the firm?—Yes, he is there now.

121. Would your brother and yourself be prepared to carry on the contract to completion on salaries? Supposing the Government elected to proceed with that work and wanted your experience, would you be prepared to carry on the work at a salary, providing that other arrangements were made to your satisfaction?—Well, I suppose we would have to. We would be prepared to carry on at a salary if it were one commensurate with our services, and with a possibility of getting our capital back at the end.

122. *Hon. Mr. R. McKenzie.*] The total contract is eight miles?—Yes.

123. What proportion of the work is outside the tunnel?—A very small proportion. There is only about £26,000 or £27,000 outside the tunnel.

124. What proportion of that outside work is finished?—There is about one-third of it completed, partly on each side.

125. Did you receive a copy of Mr. Blow's report, in which he states "The tunnel had been excavated for within a few chains of two miles at the Otira end and 27 chains at the Bealey end"?—You mean there is a discrepancy between our statements?

126. You stated that one-third of the work was finished: I understood you to refer to the tunnel, not to the outside work?—That includes the whole of the work.

127. You practically finished 2 miles 20 chains out of the 5 miles 24 chains?—No, we have not finished that.

128. How much of it?—We have driven that distance.

129. How far does the lining get to: Mr. Blow says it is within a chain or so of the face?—It is so at the Bealey end.

130. Assuming that 2 miles 24 chains have been finished, will you figure out how much of it is the balance at the same rate?—But there is not 2 miles 24 chains of the tunnel finished. We are giving you the actual figures so far as the quantity of work is taken out. There is about one-third of the work absolutely completed.

131. *Hon. Mr. Fraser.*] Could you not give us any exact figures as to how much you have finished of the tunnel at each end?—I cannot give you that now, but there is probably half a mile of lining to do at the Otira end. The distance from portal to face at the Otira end is 1 mile 77·17 links as at the 31st July. These are our measurements. That is the distance from portal to face; equivalent total length of tunnel excavated, 1 mile 52·88 links.

132. That is finished?—That is excavated. That is equivalent to the full size of the tunnel. Then the equivalent of the total lining of the tunnel is 1 mile 35·15 links.

133. *The Chairman.*] That is completed?—Yes. At the Bealey end there is 27 chains 91 links from the portal to the face, and the equivalent of the total length of the tunnel excavated at that end is 25 chains 23 links, and the equivalent total length of the tunnel lined 24 chains 66 links. The totals for the whole tunnel are 1 mile 78·61 chains, equivalent to length of tunnel completed. The total distance from portals to faces is 2 miles 18 chains 8 links: that is including both ends. The equivalent total length of the tunnel lined is 1 mile 78 chains 68 links.

134. *Hon. Mr. R. McKenzie.*] What is the material difference in working the tunnel as compared with an ordinary New Zealand tunnel, beyond the length and the cost of running out the spoil and running in material?—There is nothing special. It should not cost any more if you could manage the tunnel so as to use your plant economically.

135. Are there any objectionable features so far as the men are concerned?—Only the wet ground.

136. You have 240 men employed there?—Yes.

137. And you could employ 300?—Comfortably.

138. What would be the number altogether inside?—There would be about 200 men.

139. That implies that you would be driving the top and bottom headings in enlarging the tunnel?—Yes.

140. Have you done that?—We have never had the men to do it. Our headings are a long way ahead, and the heading is not going as fast as it should. We should have more men widening out.

141. Would this tunnel admit of that?—We have a single road.

142. With turnouts?—Yes.

143. Have you to stop after firing?—Yes.

144. Each shift?—Yes, and sometimes between shifts.

145. Do you work three shifts?—Yes.

146. I assume you have your headings manned?—Yes, especially the bottom heading. Sometimes we are short of men in the top heading.

147. Do you stop your heading when you are widening out?—No, not if we have the number of men. We can keep everything going together if we have not a shortage of men.

148. What percentage of the total work does the labour inside the tunnel represent?—We have never run it out. At last pay there were 210 men on the Otira end and there were eighty of these outside.

149. Are your incidental expenses always the same?—Always the same. There might be a little difference. For instance, the other day the men knocked off, on account of a comrade being killed, from end to end of the work.

150. Of course, you have a permanent staff?—Yes.

151. You say that the loss of the company's capital was £90,000?—Yes, total loss.

152. So that nearly represents the total capital of the company?—Only by the preferential shareholders. It represents £45,000 of my brother's and my money.