

115. After firing, how long does it take for the fumes to get outside the lower heading down the tunnel?—I could not say exactly—not very long.

116. Well, what distance do the men retire out of the heading when firing?—About 8 chains.

117. And you cannot tell us how long it takes for the fumes to go out the 8 chains?—Perhaps half an hour. It varies in different grounds and different times. If the ground is wet it will take very much longer, and if the ground is dry it will clear very much quicker.

118. How far is the heading from the widening?—20 chains.

119. If it takes half an hour to go the 8 chains, how long does it take to go out to the tunnel-entrance?—I could not say. We usually exhaust it through the pipe. It does not go through the tunnel at all.

120. How far back does the exhaust-pipe start?—About 40 chains.

121. And nobody can work in that half-mile until the fumes enter the exhaust-pipe?—Oh, yes.

122. After it passes the 8 chains from the heading the men can go into the tunnel?—There is no inconvenience from the heading smoke.

123. Not in the top heading?—Yes, that is a different thing. I am referring to the bottom heading. In the top heading, before they fire they do down and go ahead of it to wait. Usually we make every effort to arrange that the firing will be done before knocking-off time—a change of shift—and that gives time for the smoke to clear away. If the men fire half an hour before the end of a shift I do not send the men back at all.

124. *Hon. Mr. Fraser.*] How do the men get up to the face from the entrance of the tunnel—do they walk up?—No, they go up by a train, which takes them up about a mile and a half.

125. And then they have half a mile to walk?—Yes, some of them, but some are pretty near the place of working.

126. And it is the same for returning?—Yes, practically the same thing. They run out on trollies.

127. Supposing a man is working on the face, how long does it take for a man to go from the entrance of the tunnel to the face?—About twenty minutes.

128. Has there been any increase of wages given to the men since the beginning of the contract?—Yes.

129. Can you state of your own knowledge what the increase has been?—Yes, I can state what the increase has been. For common labour the increase has been 6d.; to machinememen, from 1s. to 1s. 6d.; and the shift bosses—men looking after seven or eight men working in different parts of the tunnel—1s. 6d.

130. When did this increase commence?—This particular increase commenced in February or March last.

131. Had there been any increase from the beginning up to February or March last?—Yes, but not a general increase.

132. Have you received any complaints from the men as to the terms on which they were working?—They put in a general claim some time towards the end of last year. The various items of the claim were taken up in February last, and one of the claims was a general rise in wages.

133. *Mr. Seddon.*] You spoke of the slackness on account of the creeks drying up: will the tunnel be driven much quicker when they get the auxiliary electrical plant put in position?—Yes, it will be better, on account of the better continuity of the works.

134. There will be no slackness on account of the creeks drying up then?—No.

135. Have you got the plant erected there yet?—No.

136. What prospect is there of your striking better country than you have struck already?—None.

137. You think it will be the same all through?—Yes.

138. *Mr. Okey.*] On the average, how often during the day do you carry out blasting?—I should say, probably four times. It depends on the different parts of the tunnel.

139. You allow from twenty minutes to half an hour after blasting for all the men to return: they lose that time?—Yes.

140. *Hon. Mr. R. McKenzie.*] The blasting in the widening of the tunnel does not affect the men working in the bottom heading?—No, not in the least.

141. Does blasting in the top heading affect the men working in the bottom?—The bottom-heading smoke does not seem to affect anybody with the exception of one man who works a winch 10 or 12 chains behind. That man might possibly be affected if he happens to be at his winch.

142. In that case the men in the widening and top heading can continue work when there is blasting in the bottom heading?—Yes, they do.

143. Do you use electric light in the tunnel?—Yes, in the completed portion.

144. But not in the widening?—No.

145. Do you expect you will get the same quantity, or probably more, water from the roof than you do now?—I think it will remain pretty much the same.

146. How is the quantity of water in the Bealey end?—I am not very familiar with that. I do not think there is very much from the top. They have more from the bottom, and have to keep pumping all the time.

147. Where do they pump the water from—from the face of the heading, or is there an arrangement to receive the water?—They have a sump a little way behind the face of the heading, and they move that forward from time to time and use the auxiliary pump from there forward.

148. Have you charge of the Bealey end also?—No, not at present.