

they will in a short time, but they go away without having their names in the books at all—I should say hundreds.

163. Could you tell me how many workers per month go to Otira and leave, approximately?—I should say, twenty or thirty a month.

164. Where do they come from, as a rule?—Reefton, and Christchurch, and Australia—from all over the place.

165. The reason principally given for their departure is—what?—That the job is too wet and they are tired of it.

166. Are these people miners who have stayed long in other mines?—Yes, there are many miners there who have stayed in other mines a good while.

167. The wetness is the principal thing, is it?—Yes, that seems to be the trouble.

168. Do the men compare the mines at all with the Otira Tunnel?—Yes. I have heard a lot say that as soon as the Reefton mines start again they will go back.

169. In the mines there is a certain amount of dust at the face?—Yes.

170. They prefer that to Otira?—Yes.

171. *Mr. McLean.*] Have you known men leave the work at Otira and then come back again?—Yes.

172. You know Nicholls, do you?—Yes.

173. He was secretary prior to you?—Yes.

174. He was really the agitator in connection with the four-hours shift?—I would not say that.

175. He was the man, at any rate, that made the demand and knocked off, was he not?—Yes.

176. He was in the shift?—Yes.

177. Is he working there now?—Yes.

178. Do you know whether the management refused to give him employment to start with when he came back? He was there for some days before they would take him on?—Yes, I believe that is so.

179. He is a good workman, is he not?—Yes.

180. So, notwithstanding the bad conditions, he comes back and works again?—Yes.

181. And he is working there now contentedly?—Yes.

182. Do you know a man named Dan McKenna?—Yes.

183. Do you know how long he has been on the work?—I could not tell you exactly.

184. He has been there a long time?—Yes.

185. Have you ever heard any complaints from him?—He is one of our unionists.

186. You have not heard any complaints from him about the bad conditions, have you?—He was quite in accord with our asking for these other conditions.

187. Is not the general principle underlying these claims as to bad conditions a general rise in wages? You make use of these statements to get a rise in wages?—You mean that we want more wages because the job is so wet?

188. No; I mean to say that you are exaggerating the conditions for the purpose of getting higher wages?—I do not think I have exaggerated them at all.

189. How is it, then, that men are continually being discharged for drunkenness, and that kind of thing, and yet they come back time after time: can you account for that?—It seems to me it is usually the case that a man can get a job at Otira. A man perhaps having no money comes there to get one.

190. *Mr. Reed.*] What percentage of the men working at Otira are unionists?—Speaking offhand, I should say nearly all the men there are in the union, or have promised to become financial unionists. I have only met with one or two direct refusals.

191. Why do you say that you must have preference when they are nearly all unionists already?—We want every one to join the union. We do not like working with any one who is not a unionist.

192. How many are there who are not—half a dozen?—Yes, about that number.

193. Would you strike for the purpose of forcing those half-dozen into the union?—Yes, we would; but I think we should get them into the union without striking.

194. Why make that a demand the non-fulfilment of which would cause a strike? From what you say it appears to be quite a minor issue?—I believe we would strike in the finish if we could not get them to join. We object to working with any non-unionist. I do not think it is right that we should have to battle with the contractor for their benefit when they will not support us.

195. *Hon. Mr. Fraser.*] Is there only one union which you recognize when demanding preference for unionists?—Our union—that is all.

196. That is the Federation: you belong to the Federation?—We are a branch of the Federation.

197. You would not recognize a member of any other union as being a unionist, would you?—Yes, we do; but we ask a man who comes from another union to get a clearance from that union and join us.

198. Suppose he does not: would you object to working with him?—Well, no; I do not think we should object to him so strongly as if he were not a unionist at all.

199. When you ask for preference to unionists, do you mean that a man must join your union or that he must be a member of some union—which?—We want him in our union.

200. That is to say, you think that the contractor should not be allowed to employ anybody who did not belong to your union, although he might be a member of another union?—Yes, we think a man should be in the union where he is working.

201. *Hon. Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Supposing Parliament amends the Conciliation and Arbitration Act in the direction that the law will not recognize any union unless it is registered under that Act: would your union be prepared to register then?—I can only speak for myself: I will never work under a union that is registered under the Arbitration Act. I will leave the union first.