

85. What is the practice just now, when a man disputes Mr. McLean's decision? Is any reference made to the Assistant Engineer?—No. In some cases they get the six hours when they ask for it; in others they do not. The men tell me that in some cases they have simply got to walk out.

86. Leave the work themselves at the end of six hours?—Yes.

87. Have the men complained that they have been compelled to work more than six hours in what they believed to be wet places?—Yes, at one time they did, but they have not so much lately.

88. What do you mean by "lately"?—Within the last few months.

89. The witness we examined before you—the secretary of the union there—was asked about wet places, and replied as follows: "Q. Has that always been satisfactory to the men? A. I would not say it has been satisfactory to all the men. Q. But, generally speaking? A. Generally speaking, Mr. Gavin has satisfied us."—Mr. Kennedy would be speaking from his own knowledge. He has only been there a few months. That bears out what I said—that it has been better recently.

90. Your remarks apply to prior to that date?—Yes. Of course, the contractors are beginning to find out that it does not pay them to treat men in that way.

91. *Mr. Nosworthy.*] You know what the amount of the contract was for the tunnel?—I have seen it in the paper lately.

92. Have you any idea how much more the tunnel will cost to complete under the new conditions that you have suggested—or, rather, the conditions which the Federation of Labour ask to have the tunnel completed under? How much more to the Dominion is it going to be than the original contract?—It would be impossible for me to form an estimate of what it would cost to complete the tunnel. I should say, considerably more than the contract price.

93. Did you ever have the idea that the contractors, when they undertook to make the tunnel, were receiving more for it than the work was worth, or that they were getting full value for the work?—Oh, no. I have always thought, from my experience of underground work, that when the contractors were asked or supposed to complete the work in five years the Government were a party to an impossible agreement.

94. You think that McLean Bros. have done well in getting as far through with the tunnel as they have under the conditions they have had to work under?—I think they would have got on much better if they had paid a little better and been more reasonable with the men and made the conditions more comfortable. I believe they would have been further ahead.

95. Under the conditions that you name do you think the tunnel would have been completed within the contract time?—No, I do not think it would have been possible.

96. *Mr. Davey.*] How often to your knowledge have men had to walk out of the tunnel before six hours' work in a wet place was conceded?—Several times. Men have left the tunnel altogether and have gone away. Others have come out and have been told it was all right, perhaps because Mr. Gavin or some one else could not be got hold of at the time. Any number of men have left because they would not work more than six hours—in fact, some men refused to work six hours in some places.

97. You can quite see the suggestion you have made—that until Mr. McLean was driven to give eight hours' pay for six hours' work in wet places he would not do it? That is the suggestion, is it not?—Yes.

98. How often has that occurred? A man might walk out in order to see Mr. Gavin, but that would not be walking out because he had refused. How often have men been refused, and walked out?—I could not say.

99. You said something to this effect: that if the tunnel were brought under the Mining Act it is possible the timbering would be attended to, and also that explosives would be more carefully handled. Have you any reason to suggest that there has been carelessness in the past in respect of either?—I have seen gelignite lying about. You will see a certain amount of it in any underground work. The average man is careless in the use of the stuff, if he is not afraid of the Mining Inspector. I have been mining for nearly fifteen years, and I know what it is. I was at one time a check inspector for the men, and I was continually quarrelling with the men themselves, more so than with the employer. I have seen them in the Otira Tunnel charging holes and tamping them with pieces of cement-bag, a thing that would not be tolerated in any mine in New Zealand.

100. What would be about the time this occurred?—It is a common practice now.

101. About timbering: do you know of any particular instance where that was carelessly done?—No. I recognize that work in a tunnel is a dangerous occupation, and with the most careful management there will be accidents; but I believe there would be fewer under the Mining Act.

102. This working on Sunday at ordinary pay, is it going on now, or has it recently?—There is nothing like the amount of Sunday work that there used to be, and I think the men get time and a quarter now.

103. Were you present in the Arbitration Court in Greymouth when this case was heard between the contractors and the men?—That was before my time on the Coast.

104. *Mr. Seddon.*] You have had some experience as a miner?—Yes.

105. Have you been underground much?—I was underground between fourteen and fifteen years.

106. You have been through the Otira Tunnel frequently, have you?—Yes.

107. What kind of country is it?—It is good average country to drive in.

108. Can you suggest any way of hurrying the work along?—It cannot go any faster than the heading, and there is only a limited number of men that have room to work there, and it