

is now worked the full twenty-four hours. The only thing that I could suggest would be to have the best machinery and the best men that you have got kept at work in the bottom heading, because the further you send that head the better—the further you go and the more room you are making for men to do the finishing-work further back.

109. What wage do the men get who are working at the face?—They are paid better at the face than anywhere else—11s., 11s. 6d., and 12s. 6d., and the shift-boss gets 13s. 6d.

110. What do the men get who are doing similar work in mines?—I could not say.

111. You do not know what they get at Reefton, do you?—I have worked in the Waihi Mine, doing contracting myself and being paid wages. The lowest wage we paid would be 11s.; 12s. and 13s. to machinememen.

112. You spoke about men working outside the tunnel: were you referring to the men preparing the concrete, and so on?—Yes, men working in the river-bed shovelling—general labourers.

113. How often since that first interview have you seen Mr. McLean?—We often have a pitched fight when I come along.

114. I mean, officially: have you had any more conferences with him?—Oh, yes; two or three little matters.

115. You mentioned having seen Mr. McLean and Mr. Gavin together?—Yes.

116. There has been no difficulty since the first misunderstanding?—They are always approachable, and they treat me well enough—talk to me in a friendly way, and reply to anything that I send them.

117. You said that at one time there were five hundred men idle at Reefton, and they could not be got to go to Otira: was that immediately after the strike at Reefton?—Yes.

118. What was the reason—just because Otira had got a bad name?—Yes.

119. They knew about the conditions?—Yes.

120. Had many of those men been to Otira?—Oh, yes. You will find, in any mine a lot of men who have been to Otira—in fact, they say at Otira there are only four more to come and they will have had all New Zealand.

121. You said that Otira was better supplied with labour than any mine: do you mean the class of labour that goes there?—Yes, good and bad. They have any number. Considering that they have had as many men, perhaps, as all the mines in the Reefton district put together, they ought surely to have got a good team.

122. Have the men ever made complaints to you about the ventilation?—No, they have not complained much about that.

123. Speaking from your own experience of the ventilation, is it good?—It is not too good, and it is not going to be very good, either. Of course, just where the machines are working it will be right enough. If you have got sufficient air to drive a machine, or two machines, or three, there is any amount of air just there; but the smoke is blown out of the faces and it goes further back and dies there, and the men further back are continually in this bad air.

124. *The Chairman.*] Is it going to be worse as you get in?—I do not think so. I think it is as bad as it will be.

125. *Mr. Seddon.*] Do you think that if an Inspector were there it would be improved?—I believe in ventilation by the fan.

126. The question of timbering does not come in very much, does it?—There is a good deal of the tunnel with no timber at all. In some places it does not require it.

127. I mentioned it because you said that if an Inspector of Mines was there he would see to the timbering?—He would see that timber is put in where it is required.

128. Do you think there are places where it is required and is not put in?—I can only go by hearsay. I have not been called into the Otira Tunnel at any time to inspect a face because it was not timbered well enough. I have heard any number of men say they worked in dangerous places and ought to have some timber, and so on; but that is only hearsay.

129. Since you have been visiting the tunnel you have heard of accidents there from one cause and another, have you not?—Yes.

130. You do not think the number of accidents is in excess of the usual number in mines?—I do not think the accidents are anything like so numerous as they used to be.

131. Can you give any reason for that?—No, I cannot.

132. Has the bonus system come under your notice at all?—Yes.

133. Will you tell us briefly what you think of it?—I think the only place at the present time where a bonus is paid is in the bottom heading. I do not believe in the bonus system. I do not believe in the principle of the thing. A man should either be paid wages or he should work under co-operative contract.

134. Can you tell me if the men are in favour of it at all?—I have not heard the men working in the face complain of the bonus.

135. With regard to wet places, for the last three or four months you have heard no complaints at all, have you, as to the definition of what is a wet place? The men are satisfied with Mr. Gavin's decisions?—I have heard that Mr. Gavin is giving them a better spin now than they used to get. I think that Mr. McLean had to decide it at one time, and any man at Otira will say that they get on better with Mr. Gavin than with Mr. McLean.

136. You spoke of some men having simply to walk out: was that on account of wet places?—Yes.

137. How long ago was that—some considerable time?—Some months ago; I could not say definitely.

138. Will you tell us briefly why you say that you would prefer this work to be done by co-operative labour or by day-labour?—I believe the Public Works Department have men com-