

agreed as to that; but they have explained that a contract has been entered into, and it would alter the conditions of the contract to bring the tunnel under the Mining Act now.

168. The contractor tendered under the conditions then prevailing—there was no Stone-quarries Act, even, at that time?—The contractor could not be brought under the Mining Act for that reason, but he could be brought under the Quarries Act. I could never understand that.

169. With regard to this Sunday work that you complain about, I suppose it is some necessary work that must be done on Sunday: is that so?—That is so. There will always have to be a certain amount of Sunday work—for instance, putting in a lay-by, or doing something to the road that might have the effect of blocking the whole tunnel on Monday if it were not done on Sunday.

170. You are the first that has made any complaint about Sunday work?—If you search the industrial agreements in New Zealand, whether under the Arbitration Act or mutually entered into, you will not find one under which men are paid less than time and a half for Sunday work.

171. *Hon. Mr. R. McKenzie.*] And that is the law, is it not?—Yes, under the Mining Act.

172. *Mr. Okey.*] As far as wet places are concerned, I suppose you come on them suddenly? A spring may break out at any time?—The ground may be perfectly dry one shift, and very wet the next, and perhaps the one after that dry again.

173. The engineer is not always there waiting about. A man may leave a wet place and come out: the engineer does not complain if the man gives a satisfactory explanation?—No. There is a foreman always in the tunnel. In that case the foreman would have a look at the place, I suppose.

174. Is there very much to complain of about these wet places?—For the employer to say he is going to be the sole arbitrator is altogether unreasonable.

175. We have had evidence that the Government Engineer on the ground has been called in to decide a dispute if there is one: is that evidence wrong?—It may have been done years ago—before my time there—but never since, and Mr. McLean has refused to arbitrate at all.

176. In connection with co-operative work you said that the man who did nothing would get nothing: to whom were you referring?—If the system were properly carried out the loafer would get nothing—the man who did nothing would get nothing.

177. Who is the man that does not work?—Any man that does not do useful work.

178. Were you referring to the contractor?—I contend that a contractor on public works serves no useful purpose at all.

179. You put down the contractor as a drone?—I do not like to call any one a drone. If I saw an opportunity of getting a contract and I could make a few thousands out of it, I would do it; but I do not think I should be necessary. Somebody else could be put on to manage the thing, and would do it just as well as I could.

180. The Government, I suppose—or somebody, whoever it was—would need to have an expert there to oversee the work, would they not?—Yes, and they should be better able to manage it than a contractor.

181. You consider the contractor a drone: do you not consider the secretary of a workers' union a drone?—He would not be necessary either under a sane system. Unfortunately, he is to-day.

182. You do not believe in the bonus system—something to encourage a man to do a little more work and get paid for it?—I would either put him on piecework or on wages.

183. If a man can earn a pound a day you do not believe in his having it?—Yes, I do, and I have always believed in the co-operative system.

184. In co-operative work you believe in choosing your own mates, do you not?—Yes.

185. You would not indorse a system under which you would have your mates sent to you and must admit them to your party?—No; it does not work out satisfactorily. There is only one way, I think, to classify the men, and that is to let them do it themselves.

186. But men, as a rule, do not like to vote out a man?—No. The voting should take place when men are coming in.

187. Here we have a contract taken by a contractor, and if he pays a fair price for any work that is done, can you see anything wrong with his giving a bonus?—It is a good thing for the contractor.

188. But does it not encourage the men?—Yes. If a man has a contract he should pay the proper wages, and if he pays a bonus to the man working for him he is making a subcontractor of his employee, and it is altogether wrong. If you are going to put the worker himself on piecework or on contract, there should be no other contractor between him and the employer.

189. Is not this bonus system, under which each man is paid more money to keep the pace, a better system than giving one man an extra shilling a day to make the pace for the rest?—Yes.

190. You know that this latter system has occurred in the past?—Yes; I have had to "pace it" in my time.

191. You spoke about the carelessness of the men regarding explosives. I suppose the contractors have some system by which they have one man in charge of the explosives?—We will try to get that evidence?—I fancy I have seen notices put up giving instructions to keep the caps and gelignite separate and in tins.

192. That could not be improved very much with the Mining Inspector, because he would not be always there?—The Mining Inspector can take legal proceedings, whether it be employer or employee, and he does so, and for that reason they are a good deal more careful under a Mining Inspector.

193. I take it that the books of the company will show the number of men that have been taken on and the number that have left the job?—Yes. I go a good deal by our union books. We put through a great number of men. We never know how many members we have at Otira. We may have two hundred members on our books, and perhaps only about a hundred of them can be found when you come to look round; the other hundred have gone.