

228. Sometimes not so often?—No.

229. How often do you think the Inspector of Mines visits the mines in Reefton?—I do not know.

230. Are the Government Inspectors at the Arthur's Pass Tunnel not invariably in the tunnel?—They are always there.

231. Under the terms of the contract is it not their duty—outside the Quarries Act altogether—to look after explosives if they see them lying about, or call attention to them?—I do not know if it is provided for in the terms of the contract.

232. If they are Inspectors under the Quarries Act, then they become responsible?—Yes.

233. You said that if the tunnel were brought under the Mining Act the timbering would be better?—I said it would be the duty of the Inspector of Mines to see that the places were properly timbered.

234. Is there any comparison at all between the timbering that is done in that tunnel and the timbering in a coal-mine or quartz-mine—are they at all alike?—No; it is a different class of work altogether as far as timbering is concerned.

235. Do you not think that Mr. Gavin, or the Government Inspector, who have had long experience of timbering, should be better authorities regarding it than any Inspector of Mines? Do you think they would know better whether the timbering was properly put in?—It is as likely as not that you would get a Mining Inspector who would know nothing about it.

236. Do you think there is an Inspector of Mines in New Zealand who ever saw any timber put in a railway tunnel, unless he happened to be there as a visitor?—Perhaps not. A Public Works Engineer would know more about timbering a tunnel than a Mining Inspector would.

237. You expressed the opinion that this tunnel could be done cheaper by co-operative contract than by a contractor?—Yes, that is my opinion.

238. Do you think there would be any difficulty in arranging the various sections or parts of this tunnel, such as the headings, the widening, or the concreting, in order to let the work on co-operative contract?—There might be in regard to the trucking. I do not know whether it would be possible to let the whole. Some of it would have to be done by day-labour, I fancy. The trucking would be the great difficulty, if there were too many parties.

239. Have you ever worked on a co-operative tunnel contract?—Yes, I worked in one for about twelve months.

240. Did you have any difficulty there?—None whatever; but there were only fifteen of us—a different thing altogether.

241. With the exception of the length of the tunnel, the principle would be just the same?—Yes. But you could not compare it with the Otira Tunnel.

242. The whole question with you resolved itself into this: that if the six hours a week that the men work now without being paid for, and the Sunday work, which only applies to a few men, were conceded, you would have no more serious trouble?—I am sorry I did not bring a copy of the proposed agreement. I will send one along. If what we ask is granted I am satisfied it will give satisfaction, and we are not asking for anything that has not been conceded right throughout the country.

243. If these six hours were conceded, it would make about 7s. 6d. a week increase in a man's wages, would it not?—It would not put it on to his wages.

244. You want to be paid for time from bank to bank, and you want two hours extra on Saturday, so that men receiving 10s. a day would receive about 8s. a week extra?—If they worked the time.

245. You want to be paid for time from bank to bank?—We want the hours to be from bank to bank. The men would prefer to have the time off than to get the extra money, even at double time.

246. *The Chairman.*] You want to be less time in at the work: that is it, is it not?—Yes.

247. *Hon. Mr. R. McKenzie.*] In any case it would cost the contractors more. You want to be paid for two hours on Saturday?—Yes, that is customary.

248. So that the actual increase to the contractor would be something like 8s. per man per week?—Yes.

249. Does this apply to the men working outside?—No. It would only be a matter of two hours a week to the men outside.

250. What percentage of the labour engaged in connection with the works is employed outside?—I could not say: it varies.

251. Suppose the tunnel took another five years to put through, do you think this increase would amount to £20,000 or £10,000?—In my opinion, if you have eight hours from bank to bank you will get more work from the men.

252. But, putting that phase of the question on one side for the time being?—I do not think it will increase the cost at all; it will have the opposite effect.

253. Taking the finished portion of the tunnel at Otira end, the conditions there are practically the same as outside, are they not, with the exception that you are out of the sunshine?—No.

254. Why?—The air is not the same; in the tunnel you are working in smoke and fumes.

255. I mean, in the finished portion of the tunnel?—There is no work there.

256. But when you are going in and out. The fumes are exhausted before they reach the finished portion, are they not?—Yes, they have died away before then.

257. So that practically, as far as air-conditions are concerned, it is something like it is outside, with the exception that there is no sunshine?—Yes.

258. If the conditions that the men are asking for were granted, do you think there would be any difficulty in Mr. McLean getting the number of men he requires to fully man the work?—None whatever. There is no scarcity of good miners.