

17. *Hon. Mr. R. McKenzie.*] That would be under the Arbitration Court awards?—I suppose that is it. That is very likely where it is.

18. *Mr. Veitch.*] If the Mining Act applied to the work in your tunnel, would it be a wet-time job right through?—It might not be a wet-time job the whole way, but a great deal of it would be wet time—in fact, the great bulk would, because, if I remember correctly, the definition said wet underfoot or sufficiently wet to wet a man at work in so-long a time; and that means that he has to be wetted without oilskins or an overcoat, or anything of that kind, I take it. So that it would reduce the Otira Tunnel to a wet-time tunnel all through.

19. You said that the working-conditions in the tunnel were better than they would be if the men came under the Mining Act. As a matter of fact the bank-to-bank clause applies in a mine, does it not?—Yes.

20. And it did not apply to your contract?—No.

21. Well, is it not reasonable to suppose that if the bank-to-bank system were applied to the Otira Tunnel the men would be better off?—Yes, they certainly would be. I was referring particularly to the inspection in regard to air and the safety of the tunnel when I spoke.

22. Assume that fresh tenders were called for completing the work, and that you were in a position to tender again: would you, in estimating the probable cost of the job, make allowance for conceding the bank-to-bank privilege to the men?—Yes, but not on exactly bank-to-bank lines. If I were making an estimate I would estimate the overtime that the men would work if time counted as from bank to bank—that is, they would put in their eight hours at the face, and you would pay them overtime for the time spent in going in and out. I think that would have to be done. That would mean an increase in wages, which I stated in my opening statement will have to be given, I think, in any case, to induce men to work in the Otira Tunnel. It just means an increase of wages.

23. *The Chairman.*] And a larger allowance for wet time?—Yes. Well, the wages the men earn is the great factor. The hardships that the men are working under are not very great. The actual work is not very hard. Nearly the whole of the work is done by machine drills. The excavation out of the top heading, and what we call the break-up, are done through chutes into the trucks below, and the only heavy or hard work is shovelling in the heading and shovelling from the walls.

24. *Hon. Mr. R. McKenzie.*] About half the quantity of the stuff has to be shovelled, or a little more?—About half the quantity. The men are allowed to work with oilskins, so they are never very wet or very cold. Naturally they are allowed to work with oilskins, because if you work in a wet place for six hours driving a machine drill, when you just stand and turn a handle if the drill is going well, you want some covering. The men go in very warmly clothed, because the work is not very arduous in those particular places.

25. *Hon. Mr. Fraser.*] Do you use the popper-drill?—Yes.

26. How many men have you on it?—We have only one man on the popper-drill. The popper-drill is a machine about 70 lb. in weight, and a boy twelve years of age can work it.

27. *Hon. Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Does it do as much work as the drill formerly used?—It does more work than any drill that we have for the purpose.

28. *Mr. Seddon.*] Are you prepared, in the event of your going on with this contract, to allow Mr. Gavin always to decide the question of wet places?—Oh, yes. Mr. Gavin is only working under instructions from us.

29. In regard to the inspection of the work by the Government, what is the present procedure?—There are three Inspectors, one for each shift.

30. Does the Inspector stay in all the while the shift is there, or does he just go in and watch operations?—One Inspector goes in every shift. The head Inspector goes right through every day. The other Inspectors are in on their own special work—perhaps seeing that the concrete is properly put in or that the lining is properly done, or something of that kind.

31. They are there to report on the work being done, not on the conditions of work, or anything like that?—Oh, yes; it is part of their duty to report to us if there is any loose ground or dangerous place that wants attending to; or if they see that the explosives are not being carefully handled or are lying about, or anything of that kind, it is their duty to see that these matters are rectified.

32. You say that under the present conditions there is proper inspection?—Yes.

33. You say that the men go into the tunnel to their work on trucks?—Yes.

34. How far from the face do the trucks take them?—At the very outside, 30 chains.

35. So they have to walk with their tools 30 chains?—No, they have no tools; the bottom-heading men have to walk 30 chains; the top-heading men and what we call the break-up men and the wallsmen probably do not have to walk 5 chains.

36. *Hon. Mr. R. McKenzie.*] I suppose the wallsmen are taken right to their work?—Yes.

37. *Mr. Seddon.*] How long do they take going in on these trucks?—At present, about nine minutes from the tunnel portal to where they get off at the end of the lining.

38. If you conceded the bank-to-bank provision, it would not be a great concession—you would not actually lose much time, would you?—You see it takes another ten minutes for them to walk up to the face: that would be about twenty-five minutes for the heading-men.

39. As you get in further it will take longer time?—Yes.

40. That would be approximately forty or fifty minutes a day if you granted the bank-to-bank clause?—I reckon it would take about forty-five minutes. I might state now to the Committee—it may make things a little plainer—that at the conference with the Federation of Labour, attended by the president and secretary of the West Coast Workers' Union and my brother and myself, the only matter really in dispute between us was the compulsory preference clause. We