

125. Coming back to the Otira Tunnel, you have been advocating that this work should be carried out under the Mining Act?—Yes.

126. Is there any other advantage than the bank-to-bank clause that would be gained by the men if the work were carried out under the Mining Act instead of under the Public Works Act?—Yes, in respect to sanitary conditions. The Mining Act makes provision for that.

127. Do not the conditions of contract make provision for that?—I do not know, but the fact remains that supervision on the part of the Inspector may be more lax under the Public Works Act than under the Mining Act. My experience of Mining Inspectors is that they do their duty.

•128. Do you mean to infer that the Inspectors of the Arthur's Pass Tunnel contract do not do their duty?—When the tunnel was in half a mile there was not a sanitary convenience, and that state of things would not be permitted in a mine where an Inspector came round.

129. Have you ever seen the conditions of the Arthur's Pass Tunnel contract?—I have seen them, but it was a long time ago. I have not been in touch with that place for three years.

130. Do you know whether there is full provision made in those conditions for satisfactory sanitary conditions?—Well, if the provision is there it has not been complied with.

131. Do you know whether it is an invariable practice of the Government Engineer or Inspectors to take samples of the air in the tunnel and have it analysed?—I have no faith in air-tests of that sort. The man who is working in the air is the best judge.

132. Is not this the same system that you have in the mines—this system of air-analysis?—The air is tested now and again, but no reliance is placed on the test.

133. The Inspector of Mines takes a sample of air from the mine and has it analysed?—If he has reason to think the air is bad he takes a sample. But I have seen a sample of air taken out of a place that you could not live in, and the bottle was corked up and the sample analysed, and it was said to be the best air the analyst had analysed in his life. I do not place any reliance on that test at all.

134. But is not this one of the regulations under the Mining Act?—Yes.

135. Are there not invariably a number of men in Greymouth and Reefton looking for employment?—Yes. Before the lockout the mining companies were never short of men.

136. Have you not on your books at Reefton always got a number of qualified men out of employment?—I would not say "always."

137. Invariably?—They are going in and out all the time. There are always men waiting for a vacancy at a good mine.

138. Do you know whether the same thing applies to coal-miners in Greymouth and Westport?—I could not speak as to that.

139. *Mr. Seddon.*] Summing up the objections that the men have made to you against working at the tunnel, I presume they are these: they want the tunnel worked under the Mining Act; they object to acetylene-lamps, dynamite-fumes being allowed to hang about, working six days a week, and having to get fuel on Sundays, and the accommodation at Otira. Do you think the McLeans are in any way responsible for these conditions?—I do. They are the employers.

140. Can you suggest in any way where these conditions that you allege to exist could be altered in any way by the contractors?—McLean Bros. might have contemplated that when they took the contract.

141. You spoke about the accommodation at Otira: all the men get their food at the boarding-houses, do they not?—Yes, a great number of them.

142. They spend most of their time at the boardinghouses, do they not?—No; they have their meals there and go back to their camp.

143. You suggest that if fuel could be got there cheaper it would make less work on Sunday?—Yes.

144. With your knowledge of Otira and the distance it is away from the coal-mines, do you think it is possible to get coal there cheaply?—That is a matter I have not gone into.

145. *Mr. McLean.*] You referred to a mine where the ventilation is bad: what mine was that?—The Globe.

146. Have you a Mining Inspector?—Yes.

147. How do you account for the ventilation being bad?—It is a very deep mine, and very difficult to ventilate.

148. Have any efforts been made to bring about better ventilation?—Yes; we have had the company before the Warden twice. The Inspector of Mines has sued the company.

149. What has happened?—The Inspector has ordered certain steps to be taken, with the result that we got some benefit.

150. And has there been an improvement?—Yes, a slight improvement. It is still the worst mine on the field to work in.

151. Do you think it is possible to ventilate the Otira Tunnel better than it is ventilated now? We are at present driving in or drawing out 4,000 cubic feet of air a minute. Can you suggest any method by which air could be drawn from the headings by fans? When the heading is timbered it is about 5 ft. 6 in. by about 5 ft. 6 in. wide. We are continuously running debris out; we are widening out the tunnel, and we are working along in the tunnel the whole time. I want to know if you can suggest any method by which we could convey air into the headings or drive the exhausted air out of the headings of the tunnel?—There is not room in the heading—on the side—for a small electric fan for the purpose. I should say it would be possible to instal a small fan that would work if the tunnel were wider and would drive the smoke out.

152. How are you going to get the power in?—Convey it in the same way as electricity is conveyed.