

88. Was it the intention of the union, do you think, to approach Mr. McLean first and ask for these conditions before you came out?—The matter was handed to the Federation to deal with in any way they considered best. Perhaps the Federation Executive would have approached Mr. McLean again; two of the members did. I think they would have gone to him again.

89. *Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward.*] Is it a fact that the wages paid to the men at the Otira Tunnel are higher than those that were fixed by the last award of the Arbitration Court?—I do not know what wages were fixed, but I believe they are a little higher now.

90. *Mr. Reed.*] What wages are you yourself earning?—12s. 6d. a shift at present.

91. You say that you have certain demands, and that if they are not satisfied the only thing for it is to go out: what are those demands?—We ask for full time on short shifts. I am sorry I have not got a copy of the demands here.

92. Full time on short shifts?—Yes. The night shift lose an hour on Sunday night; they do not start till twenty minutes to 1, and they lose an hour there. And the afternoon shift knock off at 11 o'clock on Saturday night: so they lose an hour.

93. So that on each of those shifts they are an hour short?—Yes.

94. What is your next demand?—For a forty-six-hour week.

95. Would not that include the short shift?—That is less the short shift.

96. Next?—The bank-to-bank clause.

97. Next?—That the Government Inspector should be arbitrator, and his decision final.

98. Next?—We put in a scale of wages for different parts.

99. That means an increase of wages all round?—Yes.

100. Upon any basis or percentage?—We just stated what we asked for each man in the different parts of the tunnel.

101. A general increase, then?—Yes.

102. Is it generally an increase that you want, or have you specified any increase?—We specified what we should like the wages raised to.

103. How many classes are there?—Four or five.

104. Can you remember the classes?—I may make a mistake if I attempt to from memory.

105. Take machinists: you will remember what you asked for them?—I was not working a machine at the time the increase was asked for.

106. What work were you doing?—Shovelling concrete.

107. What was the next demand?—We asked for a preference clause to unionists.

108. Next?—That is about all as I remember them.

109. How many of these items have you brought before the contractors up to the present time?—All of them.

110. What was the reply?—The delegates that we sent up reported to the union that Mr. McLean was unable to comply with them.

111. Have you before asked for increases of wages?—We have only asked for one increase during my time there, I think.

112. What justification do you think you have for asking for a general increase of wages?—The conditions are so bad.

113. Worse than in mining?—I cannot draw a comparison. I have never worked in a mine.

114. You know that the wages at Otira are higher than in mining?—Yes, I believe they are.

115. You consider that the justification lies in the worse conditions?—Yes.

116. Has your union decided that unless you get a satisfactory reply to each of these demands you are going out?—Our union cannot decide to go out. We have given our case to the Federation of Labour, and we can only do as they tell us, practically.

117. Have they consented to your going out?—They have promised us their support.

118. To go out?—Yes. They said that was practically all they could see for it.

119. So practically you have decided that unless you get a satisfactory reply to each of these demands you are going out?—Yes, practically so.

120. *Hon. Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Regarding this interview in Christchurch, did you think you were doing any harm, as far as any evidence you were going to give here was concerned, when you gave that interview?—No, I did not think it would do any harm at all.

121. You look upon yourself as a free man, to do and say what you consider right, as long as you do not injure anybody else?—That is the position.

122. You asked Mr. McLean for a higher rate of wages and better conditions in the tunnel?—Yes.

123. What were the conditions that you wanted improved? Did you want the ventilation improved?—I do not think ventilation was mentioned.

124. Did you want the sanitary conditions improved?—I do not think they were mentioned either.

125. Are the men satisfied with the present sanitary conditions, then?—It is a matter the union has never taken up. I hear odd ones speaking about it.

126. There is really no general complaint about the present sanitary conditions?—The matter has not been brought before the union.

127. And there is no general complaint about the ventilation at present?—No.

128. You cannot tell us how the rates of wages compare with the rates of wages in the quartz and coal mines on the West Coast, can you?—No.

129. Has there been a scarcity of qualified labourers since you have been there?—No, I do not think there has been. There are a lot of men coming and going: they will not stay very long.

130. Are there many men dismissed?—No, not a great number.

131. Are there any dismissed?—Yes, I have known of men getting the "sack."

132. You want the bank-to-bank clause: how long does it take you to go to your working-places after you leave the trucks?—The men on the concreting have not very far to go. The