

to Naseby—namely, a wide belt of country extending from the Dunstan Creek in its upper portion to the Leaning Rock, and which line may be drawn nearer to the hills the more we proceed downwards. The mountains in the north come close to the creek, but the agricultural country widens out in the flats and valleys towards the south. The strip to be reserved might leave the Dunstan Creek at a point a little below Cambrians, and strike across under Drybread, and Tinker's, towards Clyde, leaving out the greater portion of the flats, and following the mountains to the Leaning Rock. The gold deposits, wherever worked at present, along this belt of country along the Dunstan range, appear to be richer than those in any other part of the country, and gold has recently been found in several places where it was thought it did not exist. This belt would extend to and behind Spottis Hundred to Leaning Rock. With regard to the isolated ranges in the county, the upper portion of perhaps the Blackstone Hill, from the road at Hill's Creek down to the Poolburn Gorge, is auriferous, though in a piece of the lower portion of it there are no workings, but gold has been found in different parts. There have been workings about half-way the distance down to the gorge, to below the woolshed.

107. Have not reefs been found there?—Reefs have been found, but nothing has been worked. They could not get stone in quantity sufficient to warrant them in putting up machinery. The difficulty, of course, is this: that you can define a piece of country that is auriferous, in which gold has been found in different parts, but it is utterly impossible to say whether it is payable or not. There is scarcely a single working in the Maniototo now that people could say was payable auriferous ten years ago. So that if you part with all the land that cannot now be proved to be payably auriferous you will stifle mining in a few years, when all the ground now in occupation has been worked out.

108. Roughridge will be next in order, I think.—In the country lying between Idaburn and the Wedderburn, gold has been found in different parts upon this ridge, from the main road at the northern end, and above the main road. Gold has been found at different points on both sides of the ridge; but the only workings now in existence are those of the Garibaldi diggings on Maniototo side, and a few miles away—on Vincent County side—at German Hill, where there is an extensive area of auriferous country; that country is in the line between Gimmerburn Gorge and Poolburn.

109. Which is the portion of that locality which is so rich with indications of reefs?—The upper portion for a few miles below the road, that is being worked at the present time. A number of parties are prospecting; and some of them are getting out stone with payable results. There is a quartz-crushing mill in operation, and the whole of this country is supposed to be rich in reefs. This place is the scene of the Ida Valley Quartz Company's operations of some years ago; they crushed some thousands of tons of stone, and it is supposed that the reefs would have been payable under proper management. At all events they got between 2,000 and 3,000 ounces of gold. I think it would be advisable to reserve the greater portion of this Roughridge. There is a strip of country extending south of Roughridge, a continuation of the Roughridge, and which goes outside the county and into Vincent. Gold has been found at different points upon this ridge; it has been found on the faces of Ida Valley; and workings exist at different points—at Maori Gully, and the upper part of the Ida Burn, and in various gullies along there, towards, above, and beyond the Ida Valley station.

110. Beginning where the Taieri leaves and the railway line enters Maniototo, you started with the Kakanui, which you said were non-auriferous. Would you now come back to that point, and deal with the southern portion of the county?—I will proceed in that way. I may speak of the Rock and Pillar Mountains, that fringe the valley of the Strath Taieri on the western side. Gold has been found at different points; the principal gold workings in this part of the country are at Hyde, but gold has been found at different points below Hyde. Quite recently there was a rush, but not to any great extent, between Hyde and Main's home station, about three or four miles below Hyde. Along the Taieri River itself gold workings exist, below Hyde, down to the county boundary; and below the boundary, at various points, there are some parties of men at work along the river. Going above Hyde, although the country has been pretty well prospected at various times, no payable gold has been found between that and a point within a few miles of Hamilton's. From the formation of the country I do not think there will be any necessity to except that portion; it is land fitted for pastoral deferred payment settlement. But a strip about three or four miles in length below Hyde may be reserved for mining; at all events it should not be sold outright. Then, from a point a few miles east of Hamilton's, that is, from beside the end of the Taieri Lake on to Hamilton's and Sowburn, a broad belt of country along the foot of the hills, and up the mountains, would require to be reserved for mining purposes. The land I speak of is not the best agricultural land, but the best would be in front of it, on the low hills and flats. The only part of the country that remains to be spoken of is that comprised in the Serpentine Riding, the upper reaches of the Taieri. Here and there, over all that extent of country (the Serpentine) gold has been found, and in isolated corners miners are at work. This country is mostly high, mountainous, and broken, very much unsuited for agriculture, and I think a great portion of it may be reserved for mining purposes, or, at least, Government ought to refrain from dealing with it—I mean it should not be alienated. There is a belt of country along the Taieri that may be reserved for future agricultural settlement; the major portion of the country may be reserved without any injury to settlement.

111. We will go back, and now refer to the flats and plains, taking our starting point from below the lake, where we go into the country?—To what extent do you think the plains might be alienated for settlement or pastoral deferred payments, without interfering with the auriferous country?—I think the whole of the Strath Taieri, with the exception I have stated, and the auriferous strip along the river, the whole of the Maniototo Plain, and Ida Valley, and the other flats running into the Maniototo. A wide strip along the Manuherikia River, from a point where the valley opens out below the workings, in the vicinity of Cambrian's and St. Bathans, might also be dealt with for settlement; but near the mountains, as I have stated, the land should not be alienated. Some of the land along the Manuherikia, between the river and the Dunstan Mountains, is good agricultural land, and, in the opinion of some able to form a judgment, is believed to be the best land in the district; and the best of it has yet to be opened up.