

stand your question, but I may state that there is no difficulty about roads in this country; it is so open.

38. Look to clause 32 of the schedule: does that meet with your approval?—It is a matter of necessity to take the land; it means elsewhere if there is not sufficient along the railway.

39. *Mr. Whyte.*] Under this privilege which gives them the first choice, the contractors might take all the good agricultural land; but there is clause 31 which provides for that?—Taking the land high and low, and assuming an average value of 15s. an acre, they would be entitled to 374,000 acres. Then, bearing in mind that for the first seventy miles the land is mostly freehold or endowment reserves, it will be perceived that, of necessity, the company would have to select their lands in the interior valleys, and having the first choice they certainly would be in a position to select the greater part of the agricultural land.

40. *Mr. Rhodes.*] What did you say the revenue was from this district?—£48,000 from grass; from gold the revenue goes to the county.

41. *Mr. Cowan.*] I would draw your attention to subsection (5), page 10; that is a general provision which would prejudicially affect the company in respect to getting any auriferous land?—The subsection carried out to its full extent would make it extremely difficult to give the company anything at all. It says, "That no land in use for mining purposes, or for any of the several purposes connected therewith or incidental or conducive thereto, shall be set apart or surveyed for selection or be selected under this contract." Without any attempt to strain the meaning of the section, I might again state that there are mine-workings over the whole of this district; that the miners often require water-races of twenty miles in length: as a matter of fact, there is one water-race sixty miles in length, and in connection with it a sludge-channel ten miles long. The miners served by these very large works are comparatively a small number. It is a dangerous thing even to make freeholds in a gold-mining country, for the gold-miner requires a large area for his operation. Hence, the miner and the freeholder do not work well together. On the other hand, the miner and pastoral tenant do well—one wants gold, the other wants grass.

42. But, if this subsection is carried out, is it your opinion that the mining industry will be well conserved?—Yes; carried out to the extent the miners will want it carried out, it will do so.

43. But you are to be the judge?—The whole of this country is such. I am quite convinced by what has happened during the twenty odd years that I have been acquainted with it—and I have seen mining from its origin—that a great many lodes and deposits of gold are scattered over it in all directions. If I had my way I would not sell a single acre of it. I would keep it for miners and graziers. These are the industries for which the country is naturally adapted in the present state of the colony, and the state it is likely to be in for years. I am not speaking in regard to the financial aspect of the subject. I am speaking rather as having in view the development of a young country. This will be a grazing and mining district for generations to come. If these two interests are carefully conserved and nurtured in the manner I have indicated, it will be best for the colony.

44. *Mr. O'Callaghan.*] Do you think it would be better if, instead of giving frontage up to half the depth, it would be better to limit the frontage to one-third or one-quarter the depth?—No; I think it better to leave it at half; that gives more scope to vary. You cannot exceed the proportion fixed if particular circumstances might arise requiring you to do so. Then, again, if the frontage was only one-fourth, you might have to cut the country into ridiculous shapes. I may inform you that a portion of this country which was cut into long narrow strips of runs was found not to be of very workable shapes. The Land Board have from time to time been trying to remedy this by arranging the leases to expire at the same time for the purpose of amalgamating, and reletting them as one run. The difficulty of giving the company an endowment, and at the same time conserving the mining interest, might possibly be got over by setting aside certain blocks for the company, to be administered by the Government, the annual proceeds from rents to be handed over to the company.

45. *Mr. Pyke.*] Must it be fifteen miles limit?—The limit must not exceed fifteen miles.

46. Look at section 25 of the schedule; does it not place in your hands the power of avoiding the evils you have mentioned or preconceived respecting the railway taking up land in this country?—It minimises it as far as practicable.

47. Does not subsection (5) provide against those evils?—That subsection contains such comprehensive powers that one might take them to mean that the whole country should be reserved for mining.

48. Would it be an injury to the mining industry?—Twelve years ago I marked out land, and suggested the terms in which you propose to build it.

49. Under the land-grant system?—I do not think the miners ever understood that the land-grant system was to affect their interests.

50. It was in the schedule of the Manawatu Bill?—Yes.

51. As to Mr. Ewen: has he made any objection? Is he not a large supporter of the railway?—I do not know; but I know that, when he was giving evidence before the Otago Runs Committee, he was emphatic in stating that in alienating land on the goldfields there was great danger, even unwittingly, of blocking the future expansion of gold-workings.

52. Do you not think that the miners, with the full knowledge of this line, and how they were prejudiced, if it should be injurious to them, would raise an objection?—The matter has not got to the point of objection yet, but objections will be raised the very day you take the freehold.

53. Does it impinge on the goldfield between the Taieri and Hawea, except at one place?—The line itself does not impinge in the sense that it would block them up, seeing that they could make culverts and bridges over the outfalls.

54. Does it impinge, except in one place?—It runs alongside in places.

55. I said beyond Taieri?—The actual site of the line will not interfere with mining.

56. The line was surveyed with great care so as not to impinge on the mining industry?—I cannot say anything as to that.