

98. Are they plains or not; would you call them valleys?—No; they are plains.
99. Do you think that the settlement of that land would interfere with mining?—I do not think so; the mining is generally up on the hillsides.
100. On the foot of the hills as it were?—On the foot of the hills.
101. On the Dunstan Flat—taking it from there down to Alexandra—is there any mine-workings at all?—Not near the line, so far as I can remember.
102. That is how far?—To where, to Clyde?
103. Either to Clyde or Alexandra?—The distance in a straight line is fourteen miles, but it is much longer by road.
104. Fourteen miles to Alexandra?—Yes.
105. On Dunstan Flat are there any workings?—None that I am aware of.
106. Is there any indication of works having been there lately?—Not for a long time; there was some talk of deep sinking once, but the project was abandoned.
107. There is a spot above Cromwell where it does slightly impinge?—I do not remember the place particularly. The encroachment must be small.
108. From there to Hawea are there any diggings?—No; the first diggings you come to is Cardrona.
109. That is on the other side of the river?—Yes; it is on the other side of the river from the railway.
110. The workings, then, above Cromwell, are on the other side of the river?—Yes; except at Bendigo; that is on the same side.
111. There is no fair outlet from that?—I do not think so.
112. Could the railway by any means impinge on the claims at Rough Ridge?—There was a claim once near the line at Rough Ridge, but I think it is stopped now.
113. Do you consider that this locality which we have been talking about will ever be required for mining purposes—this flat country?—I do not think so.
114. Is there any part of the line, or of the land near the line, likely to be required for a reserve for outlets—for tailings, for instance?—I do not know.
115. Is it not entirely clear of diggings?—Yes; I believe so.
116. From end to end?—Yes; to all intents and purposes.
117. Is the Middlemarch contract let?—No.
118. *Mr. Rhodes.*] Do you think that this company would get 300,000 acres out of this locality without interfering with mine-workings?—That is a matter I should have to calculate before giving an answer. I should have to get maps and see what land has been sold, and get other information as well.
119. Then you really do not know anything of the matter in so far as it respects the effect of this company taking up that large area out of the district?—No; I do not.

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TUESDAY, 29TH MAY, 1888.

Mr. VINCENT PYKE, M.H.R., examined.

120. *Hon. Mr. G. F. Richardson.*] I want to know definitely whether this £850,000 is supposed to be the cost of the executed works which the company take over from the Government?—The £850,000 is the Engineer's estimate of the cost from Middlemarch to Hawea.
121. Then the work to be paid for by the company is in addition to that sum?—Yes.
122. Is it proposed that the company get land granted upon the constructed portion?—No.
123. Only on the portion to be constructed?—Yes.
124. The constructed part is to be bought at valuation?—Yes, that is so.
125. *Hon. Mr. Ballance.*] On what basis is that valuation to be made?—The company appoint one arbitrator, the Government another, and these two appoint the third. Experts would, I suppose, be chosen for the purpose.
126. On what basis would they estimate the cost of the work?—upon the value at the time of purchase? How would it be settled? Would it be settled by the amount of interest? What I want to know is, how it would be ascertained?—In the same way that similar works are usually valued.
127. *Mr. Macarthur.*] What they would cost to construct at the time they were commenced?—No; for five years these works were used as a soup-kitchen for the unemployed.
128. What they would cost to construct at the time of valuation?—What they would cost to construct at the time the company takes them over.
129. That is the way you propose to arrive at it?—Yes.
130. *Hon. Mr. Ballance.*] But how would you arrive at it?—By engineering experts; the company to appoint one, the Government another, and the two together the third.
131. Would you take for granted the state of the labour-market?—I could not tell all that might enter into the basis of such a calculation.
132. But some principle of arbitration ought to be laid down?—I understand the principle to be what the works would cost to construct at the time the valuation is made.
133. Yes; but I want to know how you arrive at that?—I am not engineer enough to tell you that.
134. *Mr. J. McKenzie.*] There is another element which I can see will come into it. It is well known that in some of the workings considerable landslips came down, and had to be removed by the contractor. Would the company consider that this element of cost should be included?—The engineer said these slips were beneficial rather than otherwise, because they would have had to remove earth to form the embankments if they had not occurred.