

a square or oblong form. There is one kind of lead that generally runs north and south, and which is the course of some ancient river-bed. There is another which follows the banks of a stream, and which is merely formed by the water washing away dirt and leaving the gold in the creek. These are the only two forms of lead that I know of; and, of course, in the creek form the gold is only found for a few chains on either side. In the old river-beds the greatest width is at Kumara, which is half a mile wide. In taking square blocks of that kind, I should say that fully three-quarters of the ground would not be required for gold-working, and only a quarter of it will probably be used for that purpose in the future.

12. So that it is very unlikely that any of these uniformly figured blocks would be entirely required for mining, even supposing there were gold-leads located in such blocks?—I should say that only a quarter of such block would be worked out, even if it were gold-bearing.

13. Would you, from your judgment and experience, think that it requires a large amount of ground to be set aside for the residence of miners around such lead or reserve, or on such reserve?—I do not think it would take any great area to do that. The requirement of the miners for the purpose of habitation is met by what we call “residence areas” on the Coast. A residence area is an acre in extent. There probably would be required some timber reserves, in places where the ground is deep, in order to have timber for the mines.

14. Assuming that each one of these blocks has a gold-lead on it, are we to infer that not more than one-third of these blocks would be required for mining?—I have already said about one-quarter.

15. Would it require a large area of land to make provision for water-races and the like, necessary for mining?—Well, that depends on the extent of the race that is constructed. I think myself that this was fully provided for in the method previously adopted for dealing with alienated lands on the Coast, where it was the practice to cut out half a chain or quarter of a chain, and reserve it for race purposes wherever it was necessary to make a race; so with the creek reserves, they could be cut out in the same way, and reserved for gold-mining purposes.

16. From your knowledge of the country, would you consider it difficult or easy country to prospect; such a country as you see on the side of the railway?—That marked yellow on the plan is easy. It is adjacent to the road and railway, and it is nearly all flat ground; but in places where water interferes and machinery is required for pumping it would be more difficult.

17. Has the road between Brunnerton and Reefton been long opened?—For many years; about twenty years.

18. That is to say, there has been access?—Yes.

19. Would that open facilities for men to prospect?—Yes, certainly. It has been prospected and abandoned in some places.

20. Is there a dense population on that road?—No; merely a scattered population.

21. There are some farms at Totara Flat?—Yes.

22. Is the mining population a scattered one?—Yes, certainly.

23. Can you approximately give us the population of the Coast within the Company's reserved area; you might give Nelson and Westland; or can you give me the mining population, or the number of those directly employed in mining?—Well, of that I can form no idea; but it could be easily obtained from the Wardens or the Inspecting Engineer for Miners.

24. Will you give the Committee some idea as to what the average earnings of the miners on the Coast amount to per week?—I know instances at Kumara where men are making very large wages; but that is obtained over a very small area, and the ground will be worked out in a few years; but I should think, taking it all over the Coast, that the average earnings do not very much exceed £2 a week. I think, however, that this could be more accurately got at in returns.

25. I merely want it generally. What do you call “large wages”?—From £6 to £10 a week.

26. Assuming a new field or a new lead is discovered, is the general result a rush?—Yes; a rush takes place after every new find.

27. Have there been many new rushes between Stillwater and Reefton?—No; not of any extent for the last twelve or fourteen years.

28. Then we may assume that, if there had been reported payable leads on this land which has been reserved, there would have been rushes?—Yes.

29. Then we may assume that a man working for £2 a week, if he could earn £6 or £8 a week, would naturally change his ground?—Yes.

30. There is no indication that payable patches are selected in these reserves?—As a matter of fact, we cannot find them. I must have expended £2,000, I am sorry to say, without a result.

31. Do you know anything about the rush to Arnold Flat?—I believe there was a rush. A prospecting-shaft was put down on the Arnold Flat, on the north side of the Arnold River, which was bottomed, but turned out not payable; they got the colour of gold.

32. What indication is that?—You can get colour anywhere; but when I am speaking of a gold-bearing country I mean a country that would pay for working.

33. Can you inform the Committee if there has been any amount of private prospecting, apart from subsidized prospecting?—Yes, a great deal; some years ago nearly every one aided in some way or other to open up fresh ground, by sending out prospecting parties, or assisting them with food while they were prospecting.

34. Do you know of any instances in which these prospecting parties were successful?—Not of late years. Since the Kumara rush the finds have been comparatively small.

35. How long is that since?—I think that Kumara opened about fourteen years ago, speaking from memory.

36. Would it be possible, do you think, for anybody to localise the existing leads—that is, to say definitely where the likely paying leads exist in the lands that we have marked on the map?—No; I think it is utterly impossible for any man to say until a shaft is put down.