

83. Is that in one of these reserves?—Yes.

84. Looking at the map of the proposed reserves, Mr. Lord, can you say with confidence that no gold will be found in these reserves?—It is out of the question for any one to say so: you cannot see under the surface of the earth, and, as I have said before, extensive prospecting has been done.

85. Over this area gold might be found?—Certainly; narrow leads may have been missed. It is quite possible to sink shafts 100 yards apart, and still gold might run between them.

86. Is all this country intersected by creeks?—Yes, in all directions. They flow to the Grey River, which runs right through the valley.

87. *The Committee.*] Is there any quartz-mining in that district?—Yes.

88. Is there a general impression that the whole district is auriferous?—Yes, it is called an auriferous district on account of the gold-mining that actually goes on there in certain places.

89. Do you think that it has been fairly prospected?—Yes, it has been better prospected than it will ever be again. When the great rush of diggers took place on the Coast there were 25,000 men. I have seen in the most unexpected places the shafts of the ancient miner.

90. When you speak of valuable timber land, what description of timber do you allude to chiefly?—Red-pine, chiefly; there are large patches of black-birch, also white- and silver-pine in places, or yellow-pine as it is sometimes called.

91. Is the silver-pine the most valuable of the timbers?—It is the best wood, in my opinion, in New Zealand; it makes excellent railway-sleepers, &c.

92. More valuable than totara?—Well, I have not had any great experience in totara, except in building. I think it is even more durable than totara.

93. Is the general quantity of timber on these reserves so large as to require no great care, or is it not so? Is it necessary that reserves should be made everywhere for timber in connection with gold?—Speaking generally, the whole country is a forest, with the exception of that part fronting the old diggings, where it has been cut down.

95. Is there any danger of it being destroyed by fire in that moist climate?—It is very rare to see a bush-fire: in fact, you can hardly set the bush on fire.

96. *Mr. Tanner.*] You say that prospecting has been carried on during the last twenty-five years over the whole land that has been reserved?—Yes.

97. Is it not mostly forest-land?—Yes.

98. Does that not make prospecting very difficult?—Certainly it does.

99. Has the prospecting, therefore, been of a superficial character?—I think not. We have pretty well prospected the whole of it. The County Council, private individuals, and others have sent out parties; I have assisted on a great many occasions, and, as I have before said, you could hardly go anywhere without finding shafts.

100. Has the work of these former prospectors been of an exhaustive nature?—Yes. After all their working the area does not amount to very much. I run it out at about 1,000 acres per annum; so that you see it would take a hundred years to work out the reserve, even at the former rate of working, when we had more miners than we are ever likely to have again.

101. Has any of the land which was formerly prospected ever been found payable afterwards?—I know of one or two instances.

102. That proves the prospect to have been superficial?—It is ground that was abandoned in the early days which was found not to be payable; since then men have gone into it at very low wages.

103. Then I understand as wages diminish with the times, the old workings will be found payable?—Yes. That is the reason why I say it is necessary to reserve the banks of the creeks.

104. You own that mining has been carried on over the blocks which are not reserved?—Yes, in patches, in or adjacent to the creeks.

105. You would not deny the description "auriferous" as being improperly applied to this country?—Well, no; not if you distinguish it from payable gold. Auriferous means gold-bearing. If you can discover gold, even with a microscope, you say the country is auriferous.

106. Is it not a fact that, where gold exists in minute grains, that land is actually good payable ground?—That is so, especially in quartz-reefing; and even quartz requires a certain amount of gold to make it pay—not a mere microscopic speck. The sea, as you are aware, contains gold in chloride form also, and it will not pay.

107. You think the days of nuggets are over?—Yes.

108. *Hon. Mr. Seddon.*] You say that this back country, Mr. Lord, is of no value for settlement?—I take it to be of very little value indeed.

109. You state, in making our reserves, we took the frontage of the river?—I did not, intentionally; I said river and railway.

110. Now we will take it from Block 81 to 62—there is no frontage to the river at all by reserves?—Yes; that is so.

111. Look at the line of railway: does that not run through freehold land?—Yes; that is so.

112. So that in this case the reserves neither front the railway nor the river?—Yes; there is freehold land on both sides.

113. This flat land which has been already sold and alienated by the Crown to private individuals the company could have no right to touch?—Unless they purchased it.

114. *Mr. Wilson.*] May I ask you, Mr. Seddon, to define the word "frontage"?—*Hon. Mr. Seddon.* I would like to conduct the examination in my own way.

115. *Hon. Mr. Seddon.*] Looking at the map upon which the railway is shown, Mr. Lord, were you in error in saying that the reserves 61 to 81 had a frontage either to the river or the railway?—Well, I was slightly in error in that; it may have been misleading. What I meant was that the reserve shut out all the useful lands along the line of railway, except in one place, as far as 62 is concerned.