

38. Would it be possible for any one to point to one of the sections and say that gold would not be found there, and that the land, if held, would not be used for mining purposes?—No. I have stated that some parts of these reserves are actually occupied for gold-mining purposes, and more is likely to be required; but that this would not take up the whole area reserved. Portions are required, and portions will not be required.

39. *Sir John Hall.*] You said some portions are now required and are worked for gold-mining, and others are likely to be required?—Yes.

40. Could you form any rough idea of what proportion is being worked and what is not?—Speaking roughly, perhaps one-eighth would be required for gold-mining, and the rest not. It would be very difficult to arrive at any exact estimate.

41. *Mr. Saunders.*] From the agreement which has been made with the Government, you would consider, I suppose, that the Government were entitled to select land that was probably payably auriferous?—Yes.

42. They would not be justified in taking land because you could not prove that it never would be payably auriferous, but you would expect them to take land which there was good ground to suppose would be payably auriferous. That would be a fair interpretation?—That, I think, would be a fair meaning.

43. And you think it would be possible to obtain all the land that was probably payably auriferous without taking so much land as they have done, as there is no proof of its being payable?—I think it possible, but not by pursuing a system of reserving large blocks of 6,000 or 10,000 acres in regular forms, because these happen to include some land fit for mining purposes. It would have to be made in small blocks and surveyed in detail.

44. *Mr. Tanner.*] I think you have admitted that the Government have the right of selecting the mining reserves in any locality within the prescribed area under the contract?—Yes.

45. Are you aware that Sir Julius von Haast, the late Government Geologist, stated that gold never would be found on the Eastern slope?—Yes.

46. And, as a matter of fact, all the gold-mining has been carried on on the Western slope?—Yes.

47. Is not the land reserved admittedly auriferous in the scientific meaning of the term?—Yes, in the scientific meaning of the term only.

48. That is proved by the land being worked more or less?—There are gold workings all over the West Coast.

49. All over the country is auriferous?—Yes.

50. Does it strike you that under the contract the Government would select land known to be auriferous?—It is their business as a Government to select land known to be payably auriferous.

51. Can you point out any land known to be of a higher gold-bearing character within the gold reserves?—Where the ground is known to be payable it is worked. So that you may take it for granted that known payable ground is actually in the hands of miners, and is being worked.

52. And would be the first most likely to be reserved?—Certainly.

53. *The Chairman.*] Will you state what percentage of the blocks of land reserved, in your opinion, could be held to be used or occupied for *bona fide* gold-mining purposes?—It is a thing you could only arrive at after a very close investigation. One-eighth of the area of the whole ground perhaps might be taken, but it is a very rough guess.

54. You have known the workings on the West Coast for very many years?—Yes.

55. And I think you are aware that the goldfield has existed now some twenty-seven or twenty-eight years?—Yes.

56. Well, knowing the extent of country that has been worked in that time, what further proportion of ground do you think is likely to be worked in the near future?—The proportion worked on the West Coast in the old days was effected by a large population. At the present rate, I should say, it would take perhaps a hundred years or so to work as much of the West Coast.

57. Can you give the Committee any idea of the area of ground worked during the time, and since gold was discovered?—I could not tell the exact amount; it is very difficult to arrive at. A great many leads were not half-a-chain wide, and if you merely confine it to the width of the leads, this would give a very small acreage indeed. Yet the occupation of land required for working that might be ten times as much.

58. Suppose you were to calculate the whole of the Coast occupied by miners for working and residence purposes, and other occupations connected with mining, what would that area amount to? Can you form a rough estimate as to the number of acres?—I should say, perhaps from 30,000 to 60,000 acres. It might be less. It would depend upon how you took it.

59. *Mr. Mills.*] You are acquainted with the whole area reserved?—Yes.

60. Have you a general knowledge of the country proposed to be reserved within the red lines?—I have not been through much of it. I have a general knowledge of it.

61. Take the country that has been reserved, that marked yellow. Could you give us an idea what extent approximately of that is country with good payable timber, what is likely to be fit for settlement when the timber is removed, and what country is rough and never will be fit for settlement?—The timber occurs in patches. Speaking roughly, I dare say a third might be valuable for timber purposes. It depends very much upon access being given to it.

62. Is there any extent of it outside the timber-land suitable for settlement, or industries other than timber?—Portions are available for settlement; and there are patches of settlement at present, and all up the Grey Valley.

63. I am speaking not of the alienated country, but of the area for reservation?—The general character is terrace-land, broken up by gullies and creeks. Some might be available for stock-farming.