

4. Will you tell, on the average, how many cubic yards in the year he will take out?—That depends on the quantity and head of water.

5. Cannot you give me from your general knowledge an approximate idea?—It depends on the system of working, according to the character of the wash-dirt, and the depth and quantity of the water available.

6. Do you think that a miner will wash out an acre in the year?—Yes, and more.

7. How much more?—That depends on the depth.

8. Is an acre per man a fair approximation?—I would not like to say; yes, it would be a fair approximation.

9. I want an average?—It would be about an acre.

10. Then in deep workings, that is to say, lead-workings, it is nothing like that?—Oh, no.

11. Is it half that?—No, I should not think so.

12. Would a quarter of an acre be fair?—I think it would be too much.

13. Can you state the number of miners at work on the coast?—I cannot carry the number in my head—about 5,883.

14. What yield per week, in your opinion, would bring gold under the category as payable?—If it could be brought in something like the wages that agricultural labourers get, it would be payable.

15. Do you think that miners would suffer all the hardships of mining at a return of 8s. a day?—Many of them will work for less than that, with the chance of getting something better.

16. I think statistics for last year show that the average working-miner gets about £50 a year each man?—There was a reason for that: it was the lowest average that has ever been, and the reason of that was that the Gold Duty Abolition Act came into force in the end of March, 1891, and a great deal of gold was held back by the banks. It made the gold returns for that quarter considerably less than they otherwise would have been.

17. The year before that, was it nearly £69?—I do not recollect.

18. Would you call that payable land?—Yes, I do.

19. Do all the lands marked yellow in the proposed reserves come fairly under that head?—Yes, they do; the whole of it, and all of that proposed as well.

20. We have heard a great deal about shafts: are there many abandoned shafts on the area reserved?—A great many.

21. As a practical miner, when you say “abandoned shafts,” do you arrive at the conclusion that the claim is payable, or otherwise?—There are many hundreds of abandoned shafts, which were left as non-payable a few years ago, which would now pay to take up and drive out. It would in many instances pay remarkably well to work if they could get the water to that ground. A grain and a half of gold to the cubic yard would pay all expenses to work it with modern appliances—that is considered payable mining-ground in Otago.

22. It is a sort of starvation-wages?—I know one claim, that only yields two grains to the cubic yard, which paid all expenses and 10 per cent. on about £10,000.

23. In fact, you are giving more than that to the unemployed?—I cannot say.

24. Is there not a general opinion amongst miners that the best and most profitable fields in the district have been worked, and that likely leads can be fairly well defined now?—The opinion of the miners is that the whole Coast is auriferous.

25. Yes, from a scientific point of view. Would it not be possible to obtain evidence to locate payable land?—I do not think so.

27. Do gold-leads and deposits such as are caused by ancient rivers exist in regular forms, square blocks, and narrow strips?—One of these deep leads may run in all manner of directions; they run here and there. A break will take place in them for a short distance, and then you will pick it up again.

28. Can you define them on the surface?—No.

29. Then, do you consider that rectangular blocks, and blocks bounded by straight lines, are likely to indicate the true position of leads and various auriferous beds?—There seems to have been leads of alluvial gold running right through from Slab Hut Creek to Block 7, Snowy River; but these leads take in a larger area than that reserved; that being the case, straight lines are sufficient for the purpose.

30. What I want to know is this: are these rectangular blocks likely to represent the true defined area of these leads and patches?—Yes.

31. Do gold-leads and deposits exist in irregular forms?—It would be impossible for any man to stand on the top of the ground and say exactly where the different leads are. I say irregular.

32. Then these regular forms cannot possibly cover the true area—a regular figure cannot cover an irregular figure. Is it possible to define these leads?—I do not think so—not on the surface.

33. As it is impossible to exactly define the paying ground, could not the Government, with equal likelihood of success, have reserved other lands away from the line?—The very best auriferous ground is alongside the line.

34. That is an opinion?—No, it is a proved fact.

35. You say the Government know from evidence where the paying centres are?—The land taken is part of the country that should have been taken, at any rate.

36. Has this country been known to be likely to be required for a lengthy period?—Yes.

37. When was it first known?—In 1885, certainly.

38. *The Chairman.*] Am I correct in assuming that the method adopted by the Government in taking this reserved land, which you say was known to be required for mining, has been to decide upon an area, and cut this up into blocks by straight lines, as shown on the map, so that they could just get within the limit of 10,000 acres?—Well, I do not know that they could do it any other way.