

39. *Mr. Wilson.*] Were you consulted?—I had something to do with it.

40. Do you not think it a strange coincidence that these lines of boundary between block and block should exactly coincide?—No; these leads twist about considerably, and no one could tell where they are by merely going over the surface of the ground.

41. Then you must have included ground that does not include leads?—No; it is all auriferous.

42. Is it one patch of paying gold?—I cannot say that, and very likely there is some very low-lying land in the creek-beds in which you might not find gold; but if you let that go in settlement, even if there were no gold to be found in some of the low-lying lands, it would stop all mining being carried on, owing to the tailings coming down and covering it.

43. Has the development of gold-mining been so rapid in the district as to necessitate these reserves being made?—Well, I think they ought to be made; I think there is a development in mining, and I do not think it would be right to give away any of this land for settlement.

44. Has there been a great influx of population since these reserves were made?—No.

45. So that it has not in any way affected the prosperity of the Coast?—In that respect I may say that the Midland Railway Company has stopped people from cutting timber off Crown lands.

46. How do you account for the few mining people in the district, which is one mass of paying-land?—I cannot tell why there are not more.

47. Now, would not you imagine, if all this country was so thoroughly paying, that there would be an influx of population to work it?—I am sure there would be if all the water was conserved. It would then be worked profitably—that is, the greater portion of it.

48. What would be the cost of bringing in the water?—That would depend on the district it came from.

49. Is it a fact, Mr. Gordon, that the introduction of water-races by the Government has proved a loss to the colony?—No; some of them have paid 15 per cent.—for instance, that at Kumara.

50. We all believe that the Kumara is a good one. Are you aware that the rising generation on the Coast does not care for the hardships of a mining life?—I think that is a mistake.

52. Is it not a fact that the old and original digger is the only man that cares for prospecting at present?—I do not think so, and, as a reason, I would state that the original diggers found gold very easily in the beds of creeks, and prospecting requires more money to test the ground than it did in the shallow workings in the early days.

53. Are the people on the West Coast likely to know something about these diggers, and the prospects of mining?—Yes; but I would not give much for the opinions expressed in some of the newspapers with reference to this.

54. Are you aware that certain sums of money have been spent for subsidising prospecting?—Yes.

55. Are you aware that this has met with success?—Some of them have met with success.

56. Do you attribute that want of success to the absence of gold or the want of skill?—I cannot remember many places where prospecting-operations were carried on to any extent in this district.

57. You say between Slab Hut and Red Jack's Creeks?—That is the track of the gold-bearing belt—through the blocks reserved.

58. Can you give us any idea about the width of that?—It extends over a great area.

59. What is the widest and narrowest, and we can average it ourselves?—From two miles and a half to three miles and a half; three miles might be an average.

60. What do you consider the width of a true lead?—A lead is not remarkably wide; it is not one river-bed, but a continuation of river-beds that have shifted about from time to time.

61. Are there a number of abandoned water-races that command that?—No; there are plenty of old water-races abandoned where there was only a small quantity of water available, that the miner used to work with in the early days by using a common sluice-box.

62. Then the inference is that you cannot get water there?—The races are not large enough; they are what you call catch-water races.

63. So it is a questionable thing whether you could work that ground if you had water?—No, there are large areas of ground that could be worked.

64. Does one of these reserves for the Arnold district extend over the Arnold Flat?—In No. 81 there is some flat land.

65. I believe there is good timber on it?—Yes.

66. Is there a supposition among mining men that there is coal there similar to Brunnerton?—There may be in some parts of it. I would not say it is not coal-bearing.

67. Well, now, have they not recently tried it for coal?—I am not aware. They are driving tunnels in it for gold, and they have been working in them for years and years.

68. Would it not be a fair inference, judging from your knowledge of the country, that the Blackball coal-seam continues for some distance under B1, Block 220? The Blackball seems to run, at any rate, about a mile in an unbroken line, but that is pretty well included in the area. Is it likely to extend under Ford's Creek?—Possibly it might be found there.

69. Has it come under your notice that there are coal-bearing lands which are included, or are to be included, in the mining reserves, which contain good house-coal, and in some instances mining claims have been asked for coal?—Yes. Gold-mining claims and coal have been worked alongside one another. The coal is only here and there in small patches.

70. Do you know of instances in which people applied for coal-leases and subsequently found that gold-claims had been granted to other people?—It is possible, but I cannot remember any such thing.

71. In your opinion, as an expert miner, would it have been possible, considering that the Coast is entirely auriferous, that the Government could have selected reserves to meet the require-