

4. *Mr. Wilson.*] What was the date of Algie's complaint against the company for interfering with timber-cutting?—I have not got the date, unfortunately. All these things are written down in the minute-book, and I have not got it here.

5. About what time?—Perhaps Mr. Elliott, Under-Secretary, Mines Department, could give you the date. It was within a few weeks of Mr. Fergus visiting Nelson Creek.

6. Was it at the same time that you had the interview with Mr. Scott?—It was previous to that.

7. Was it two years previous?—Not two years.

8. Are you sure?—I could not be sure as to dates.

9. Approximately?—I cannot keep dates in mind, when I have written them down.

10. If I told you it was two years, would you deny it?—No.

11. Was the interference on the part of the company explained at once?—Yes; but not until I had taken all this trouble and action in the matter.

12. You mean seeing Mr. Scott?—I think I had the explanation first with Mr. Pavitt, and at my interview with Mr. Scott the matter was talked over again.

13. That is, the interference of two years previous was talked over again?—No. It might have been mentioned at my interview with Mr. Scott, but we did not allow any time to elapse before we took action.

14. Have there been any other interferences with the miners on the part of the company?—Not that I know of.

15. Do the miners, as a rule, cut their own timber or buy it from the sawmillers?—Of our timber at Nelson Creek 80 per cent. has come from the sawmills.

16. What has been the effect of the company carrying timber at a lower rate? Has it improved the supply of timber to the miners, and reduced the cost to them?—Yes, to a certain extent. If you want a very large quantity at one time you can get it a little cheaper now than you could previously to the Midland Railway being inaugurated. If you require a small quantity, or about the usual quantity used by miners, it is much about the same price. For instance, we cannot get a small quantity at Callaghan's sawmill—that is, near us; we cannot take other than a large quantity, so now consequently nearly all the miners get their timber at the end of the Ahaura Bridge. We get that carried by road—not by rail.

17. The fact of the railway being there has reduced the price at the mills?—It has shut Mr. Algie up.

18. During the currency of the contract have there been any restrictions upon the taking up of mining claims—any difference from what prevailed before?—No; I have known no difficulty in getting mining claims.

19. You referred to your own claim. You said it was 4 acres, and that you employed a man and a half. How long will it take you to work out that claim at the rate you are going?—That particular portion I referred to as being 4 acres, supposing the man and a half mentioned were employed, would take us three and a half or four years to work out.

20. What claim did you refer to when you said it would take forty years to work it out?—That is the whole of the ground lying about my water-rights.

21. What area would that be?—More than 100 acres, perhaps.

22. Then, it would take you eighty years to work it out?—Yes; there is eighty years' work there.

23. What is your opinion as to the method of dealing with these reserves, with reference to mining and settlement? Supposing a Board was constituted of experienced men in mining like yourself, would it be possible for such a Board to consider all applications for lands for settlement, with a view of allowing them to be taken up, unless the mining districts said they would interfere with mining? Would it be possible to arrive at fair conclusions as regards lands for settlement?—It would be possible; that is all. But miners as a rule are against the multiplication of local bodies, and we have perfect faith in the Government and Wardens to deal fairly with us in all applications; and we would rather your applications for agricultural and pastoral holdings should go before the Wardens than before a Board. Then we should have a chance of objecting in a legal way.

24. Then, if the applications were brought before the Warden, whom you say you trust thoroughly, would it be possible for the Warden to arrive at conclusions to place people on the lands without interfering with mining?—Perfectly clear; it would be possible.

25. I think you stated that there are pieces of ground in your district that would come in suitable for settlement without interfering practically with mining?—I did not say ground suitable for settlement. I said there was ground not required for mining at present.

26. You have been on the coast for a considerable number of years?—Yes, since 1866. I have been in the Grey Valley since the end of 1868.

27. Has the population increased materially within the last few years on the goldfields?—The population has increased, but by means of women and children.

28. You have more women and children, not more miners?—No, not more miners.

29. Has any opinion been expressed—perhaps you have heard it in your district—that much of this land reserved would not pay to work if the water was got free?—I have no doubt there is land in the district that would not pay with free water; but I have no personal experience of it.

30. From your experience would you say it was possible for any person to define the lands which are payably auriferous, and define them in large areas such as are made for these reserves?—Perfectly possible, Sir. There are three well-defined lines of gold-bearing lands running through the Grey Valley; that is, all the land running south and north—the lands lying between the south and the north—are required for purposes incidental to mining. It is quite easy to define this long line of proved continuous auriferous land running from Ross to Reefton.

31. What width would you say that was, taking the length of each one?—The proved auri-