

78. *Hon. Mr. Seddon.*] You have given it in your evidence that the miners were stopped cutting timber, and that Algie was interfered with. Was Algie cutting sleepers?—I think he was cutting everything required for the goldfields at that time.

79. What timbers were the miners cutting?—I think they were cutting sleepers for some of the contractors there, and firewood.

80. You say 80 per cent. of the miners get their timber from the sawmills. Where do the blocks come from?—When at any distance from a sawmill the miners saw them themselves. But the Ahaura mill is now providing them.

81. These blocks of timber are used solely for mining purposes?—All for mining purposes.

82. You say the railway has closed Algie's mill?—Perhaps I made a mistake. It has been completely closed since the railway got the timber from the other sawmill.

83. You are aware that under the contract the sawmillers were to be protected? Has Algie had any difficulty in getting any timber to your knowledge?—I do not think he has had any more difficulty in getting timber, except so far as the interference with rents and royalties. The bush has not been much interfered with.

84. You said there was no difficulty in getting claims at the present time, but you were interrupted when you were about to say something about residence areas. Has there been any difficulty about the miners getting residence areas?—There was a difficulty when I left home.

85. There is a difficulty in getting an area on which to live?—That might apply only to the ground at the foot of Nelson Creek; but there have been applications for areas not dealt with, and there was an application for completing a site in Hatters' town a week before I left to come here, and the parties could not even get that.

86. That is right in the centre of the diggings?—Yes. It has been a township for some time, but there appears to be a difficulty about it. This party was in the township and could not get a site to build a house.

87. There is no surveyed township at Ngahere?—Not that I know of.

88. *The Chairman.*] Do you know if the Warden refused to grant them under instructions from the Government?—I know the Warden did refuse them, but I do not know under whose instructions.

89. *Hon. Mr. Seddon.*] You are quite satisfied with the Warden if he should act under the law. You were referring to him acting under the Mining Act?—Of course, under the Mining Act.

90. And, if so, that would give you the right to object?—Yes.

91. If the land required for use was in the mining area?—Quite so.

92. You cannot sell land which is granted by the Warden?—I am perfectly well aware of that.

93. And it is where applications were made under the Mining Act, such as Algie's, apply?—Yes. Where lands are under the Mining Act we have the privilege and power to object.

94. You do not wish to infer for a moment that the Warden should have power to sell the land?—Not at all. Under the Act the Warden has no power to sell.

95. You said there was some land in the district not at present required for mining. Does that refer to land adjacent to the present workings or away from the present workings?—There is a large lump of country—what we call Bell Hill—which lies between Red Jack's Point and Bell Hill Flat, which I say we do not require at present for mining purposes. That is about 10 miles inland, or 12 miles from the main Grey Valley Road. Then there is a portion of land lying to the north-east of the Government dam—that is, land lying between the head waters and the Ahaura River. There are some thousands of acres in there I do not think you could claim for mining purposes.

96. Your remarks would not apply to the lands marked yellow on the map?—Not at all. I have said that we want the whole of the country to the westward of the Government dam for mining purposes, and a little to the north-east and south of the Government dam. That away to the eastward the company might have, if you could mark off Bell Hill.

97. That is the land you referred to in answer to Mr. Wilson's question, and not to any of the land marked yellow?—No, none of that.

98. Under the original contract there was what was known as the alternate-block system, with a mile frontage and fifteen miles back. Each alternate block was reserved for the Government. Was that preferable to giving the company the right to select any area?—Most preferable to the company.

99. If we had no right to make mining reserves such as are now made it would really be preferable to the company as it stood?—Yes, because they would have the gold-bearing ground on the alternate blocks.

100. Then the Government would have no benefit at all by doing away with the alternate-block system unless for these reserves?—No.

101. Has the making of the reserves to some extent restored confidence?—Yes, from the first. It began to restore confidence months before they were made—when the Government made the small reserves at Hokitika. It was the Government that began to restore confidence when it came into power. It is the first Government the West Coast has ever had.

102. You say that as far as the mining industry is concerned, and those engaged therein, the making of these reserves has to some extent restored confidence?—It has, and most decidedly.

103. What is the area outside this dyke known as the deep lead, taking the main Grey River as a base-line? What is the width of what is known as payable auriferous drift?—Of course I do not take the deep drift as one of the runs I allude to. That is only a cut through it. The width of the run at Nelson Creek—we have proved it from below Try Again to Owen's Lookout—is between six and seven miles. That is the width of the lead right all along that line.

104. Now, taking the length of the coast-line, you say there are two or three hundred miles?—I have no doubt it is. I have no doubt that it runs through Blenheim and Marlborough myself. I have not the slightest doubt.