

105. Take from Charleston to Karamea—that is about three hundred miles?—Yes, that one line is proved at short distances along the whole line.

106. Take the coast-line as a base-line, going back towards the ranges; what width as an average is the auriferous country?—There is a small portion that we may call blank—what is occupied by barren hills, where it has been washed off. Then the nearest point that would be easily understood would be the point at Marsden.

108. What distance is that back?—I think about four or five miles. There is a clearly proved run there at Marsden, Irishman's, and the new rush, and the lower end of the Kumara diggings towards the sea. I fancy that the higher end of the Kumara diggings belongs to the run that Nelson Creek belongs to. That is seven or eight miles back to the sea. At Nelson Creek the coast-line takes a bend, and it is not easy to keep the coast-line as a base. That would be about fourteen miles as the crow flies from Nelson Creek. That, I think, is the run, with Kumara, Dungaville, New River, Arnold, and No Town; Half Ounce, Granville, and the upper workings of Noble's Creek—that is the middle run. Along the back, and further inland, there is another run.

109. Are you aware that very large sums of money have been spent in the construction of Government water-races on the West Coast?—Perfectly well aware.

110. Will the Government race at Nelson Creek command any portion of the ground mentioned in your evidence?—It commands easily the whole of the water that falls into the Ahaura River to the westward of the ground I have mentioned that the Midland Railway Company might get. It commands the whole country from Blacksand Creek to the Grey River. That includes a great lot of country which has been prospected and is known to be payably auriferous provided the supply of water was there; and it would also command all the unworked ground round the head waters of Kangaroo Creek and Red Jack's Creek. There is some very valuable auriferous drift at Kangaroo Creek ready for operation when the water can be brought there. There is, for instance, Fenian Creek, with very high terraces and very valuable sluicing ground. The water-race would also command the head waters of Red Jack's. The race would command then, to speak generally, the No Town Riding, which is entirely out of the Nelson Creek Riding. To extend it further would perhaps entail a large cost, but to extend it to the places I have mentioned is practicable.

111. Then, if the land were to be alienated from the Crown it would entail loss upon the colony? Would the race be of any value?—No value at all. Its only value would be to the claims already taken up; and the owners now are contending with the farmers.

112. If the land were alienated from the Crown, or selected by the company, what would be the effect?—It is very easy to answer that question. The money now sunk in the race to a large extent would be valueless, unless arrangements could be come to with the company, or whoever got the land, to bring the race on to it with the water. As I have already said, the miners would rather see the land and race remain the property of the Government. It would be unsatisfactory, I think, to alienate the land.

113. You have said there was uncertainty prior to the reserves being made; would it, in your opinion, be conducive to mining to allow that uncertainty to remain?—It would not; we have had enough already. We want that removed, whoever takes it up.

114. Would it be advisable for a company or the Government to put the race in repair, or extend it, if that state of things continued to exist?—I think it would be advisable for the Government to expend more money on the race; and I believe it would pay a company to do it if the land was resumed.

115. Is that contingent on the reserves being made or proposed to be made?—Contingent on the reserves being made—that the same company which gets the reserves gets the race.

116. *The Chairman.*] Are you aware that this race is, at the present time, valueless?—I am perfectly aware of it—rendered valueless because of the uncertainty.

117. I want to know whether, in your opinion, the water-race is perfectly valueless or not?—To a certain extent it is. There are a few claim-holders making a fair living by reason of the water-race being there. It is valueless as far as the Government are concerned. That state of things has come about through the uncertainty. There would be plenty of claims working to-day but for the uncertainty as to whom to deal with.

118. Has there ever been a single dispute amongst the miners as to whom they got the mining lands from?—No dispute about the mining lands pure and simple, but trouble about the outlets and low-lying lands.

119. Are you not aware that the Government have let the races for a period of two years at a peppercorn rental?—I am aware of that. I did not know the rental.

120. Is it or is it not a fact that the race has been let by the Government because it is in such a condition of repair that it is impolitic for the Government to take the risk of maintaining it, and keeping it in working-order?—I believe that is so.

121. Has the uncertainty in making the reserves had anything to do with rendering the race in a dilapidated condition?—I think it had something to do with it.

122. Are you not aware that it will require a very large sum of money to be expended in order to put the race in good working order?—£16,000 I calculate would be required to put it in order.

123. Can you give the Committee any information as to what it would take to extend it so that you could work the auriferous land you have described near the Ahaura River?—That would not cost much. Some £7,000 or £8,000 would take it there.

124. In addition to the £16,000?—Another race. It is a different branch. It would be a different line of race from that which carries the water along the Nelson Creek watershed.

125. What would it cost to construct that branch?—£7,000 or £8,000. I think the estimate has been made, and is in the hands of the Government.

126. Do you know what it would cost to take the race over to Red Jack's and No Town?—No. The calculation I made to bring it down between the Government dam and Try Again would be £16,000, to make it carry as much water as it did at first.