

127. *Mr. Wilson.*] Is it a fact that the ground commanded by this race is worked out, and that it will have to be extended to be of use again?—It is not a fact. There is plenty of ground to be worked by the water-race. There is all the Try Again flat, and the new claims held by the New Bendigo Company; and there is the deep ground which I mentioned yesterday, lying below these claims. There is Noonan and party, who took up a claim below Bendigo; and all that ground can be worked by the Government race if it is only repaired.

128. If the ground was so richly payable, would it not in your opinion be profitable to repair that race?—Profitable to whom?

129. Profitable to the Government?—I do not know if it would be profitable to the Government. It would be profitable to our district, very profitable indeed.

130. Do you think, if this land was so payably auriferous, that the Government would allow so large an amount of money to lie dormant, when by a further expenditure they would get a large return from it?—I do not know what the Government would do. The fact is that the ground is highly auriferous, and if the race were in repair water for that ground would be available.

131. What was the reason for allowing the race to get into an unsatisfactory condition?—A great deal has been owing to the uncertainty of the holdings on the goldfields. People have left the fields, and gone in for other things.

132. Did they leave the goldfields because the ground would not pay?—Well, I suppose some of them must have left because their claims would not pay.

133. And, consequent upon that, the water-race has been allowed to get into disrepair, because it was not paying interest?—I know that it could not have returned much during the last year or two.

134. Is this the evidence on which you base your statement that this is payable ground?—The evidence upon the ground is my own personal knowledge of the ground that it is highly auriferous.

135. Then the Government did not accept your evidence as conclusive, or sufficiently good to induce them to repair that race?—The Government have never had my evidence before in the matter.

136. Turn to the reserve at Kopara, do you know anything about that flat country there?—I know the south-west side of the river, and I just know the north-east side, and that is all.

137. Would you consider that country as coming under the same category as Bell Hill?—I think some of it might be good for mining.

138. Some might be included for mining?—I have said so already. I would not interfere with mining operations at present. I have carefully examined all the reserves in the county office before I came up here; therefore, I do not want to go over them again.

139. Have you any idea what amount of this land in the reserves commanded by the water-race is over 500ft. above sea level?—I do not know what it would be. There is none of the ground that I know of included in the reserves that would be too high for mining operations, or that would make it inaccessible for mining claims.

140. *Hon. Mr. Seddon.*] With the uncertainty that there might be no reserves for mining, would it be possible to get any company to take over the race from the Government and to extend it?—No company would think of taking the race unless they got a large amount of ground alongside it.

Mr. ROBERT HYNDMAN examined.

141. *Hon. Mr. Seddon.*] What is your name?—Robert Hyndman.

142. What are you?—Miner.

143. What experience have you had?—Well, I have had experience since I was twelve years old at mining—that is, about eighteen years.

144. You are a practical gold-miner of eighteen years' experience?—Yes, Sir.

145. Where has your experience been—on the West Coast?—Yes.

146. What part of the West Coast are you intimately acquainted with?—From Martin's Bay up to Kumara.

147. Have you done any prospecting in different parts, and where?—Nearly all over it.

148. What is your experience in this prospecting?—My experience of Westland is that it is all auriferous country, from Martin's Bay up to Kumara—as far as I have travelled over.

149. Have you seen these reserves which have been made on the map?—I have seen a few.

150. Do you know the reserves about Kumara?—Yes, quite well.

151. Is there any land in these reserves which is not required for *bona fide* mining?—They are all required for *bona fide* mining.

152. It has been said here that shafts have been sunk in the early days—numerous shafts have been sunk—on the coast-line running along the Grey River down to Ross, and that this fact shows that the ground has been thoroughly prospected. As a practical miner, can you say if you would consider it so?—They have not prospected the ground.

153. Can you explain?—From my own experience I can give an illustration. A shaft was sunk by Smith and party, about a mile from Stanton's corner, on the Loop-line Road. It was sunk to a depth of 128ft., and not bottomed. The party in sinking the shaft found a thin layer of wash going 1½dwt. to the load, or thereabouts. That shaft was not bottomed, like a great many more that have been sunk on the West Coast, through the water coming in and driving the men out. They had not power enough to beat the water down. I have known other shafts to be sunk along the West Coast, where they found a little gold from the surface down, but not sufficient to pay for driving purposes. Sinking shafts in these reserves is just like a man looking for a needle in a haystack; because one shaft, two shafts, or a dozen shafts are no criterion to go by. In the large flats there you might be within 20ft. of the gold, and then leave rich ground behind you. Someone else might think there was gold there and say, "I will give it a trial." That is the first thing they would do. It is all a matter of opinion where gold is likely to be found on the West Coast.