

ments of settlement, so as not to interfere with the land close to the railway as constructed?—They could not reserve areas for settlement on the land marked as mining reserves.

72. You are aware of the system of advertising applications before the Midland Railway contract was made?—Yes.

73. In your opinion, would this method not give equal satisfaction to the requirements of gold-mining and at the same time encourage and develop settlement?—No, for the simple reason that it would not do to give any of this land for settlement.

74. But, notwithstanding that fact, Mr. Gordon, that land was intentionally included in the land set aside for selection by the company?—That I cannot go into.

75. Is it a fact that many people have applied for residence-areas on the West Coast, under the Mines Act, who were not engaged in mining?—I do not know of any, with the exception of those who are living on the goldfields, and they are men who are getting their living from the miners. Some of them might not be termed miners, but they get their living from the mining population.

76. If the company had been able to deal with this land, it would have got the benefit of such areas by selling them to these people?—There are plenty of these residence-areas on auriferous blocks for which compensation has to be given if they are required for mining. Any miner can go and apply for one of them.

77. Do you not think that settlement on the West Coast would be the greatest aid to mining, and if settlement does not take place mining will diminish?—Mining is the thing that the West Coast is really most dependent upon. There are over thirty thousand people on the West Coast depending on mining.

78. Is it not admittedly a good policy that land-settlement should go hand-in-hand with railway- and road-construction?—I say that it would never do to give this land away for settlement, because it would stop mining altogether, especially in the Grey Valley.

79. Does the development of a coal-mine increase the prosperity of a district more than the development of a poorly-paying country for gold?—Gold is our great factor.

80. If you have a good coal property, and on it a poorly-paying gold-deposit, would it be to the interests of the colony to develop the coal in preference to the gold?—I should say, if the coal was good, I would take the best.

81. Would that apply to the district round Reefton, where this coal has been applied for?—Certainly not. Gold is most predominant there. Coal is only found in small patches.

82. Then, in your opinion, gold-mining is more valuable than coal-mining round Reefton?—Yes, certainly.

83. Then, in the face of it, you admit that the obstruction to the settlement must of necessity be detrimental to the company, who would otherwise have the advantage of settlement along the line?—I do not think the company would get many people to settle on this description of land, if it were all open to-morrow for settlement.

84. *Mr. Saunders.*] I think I understand you, Mr. Gordon, that all the land that has been reserved for gold purposes is properly reserved and required to be reserved?—Yes, that is so.

85. You do not think that it could be separated in smaller quantities, so as to include all that is necessary for gold-mining afterwards?—I would not like to be the surveyor that was sent out to pick what is auriferous of it and what is not. Altogether it is one of the most auriferous blocks on the West Coast.

86. Speaking generally of the reserves that have been made, you think that all the purposes might not have been secured with much smaller reserves?—I do not think they are secured now with the present reserves.

87. *The Chairman.*] What is the average width of those blocks?—About two miles and a half to three miles and a half.

88. What is the general width of the known leads that have been worked on the Coast?—It varies in different places. At Nelson Creek the lead may be said to be four miles wide; the gold runs across the country there from Owen's Lookout to Try Again.

89. I do not care which way it runs. What is the widest lead?—It is not a lead: it is a succession of leads. It is very hard to define a lead, because in a portion of this district they are not leads.

90. What is the widest lead you know of?—I should think about ten chains—that is, the widest lead that is one lead only.

91. You know of some parts of the Coast where there are a number of leads running parallel to each other. What is the average distance between these leads?—They are pretty well together, as at Kumara. The whole ground between these leads is payable, and can be wrought from lead to lead. In Kumara there are seven leads in three-quarters of a mile, and all the ground worked between each lead.

92. Where there are several leads running parallel to each other, what do you think is the widest belt of country enclosed?—Owen's Lookout to Try Again is over four miles; it has not been clean wrought. It is in close patches and very short distances.

93. In quartz-reefing country, is it pretty easy to define the area of the gold-bearing quartz?—It would be a very hard thing to define them, especially on the West Coast, as there is such an immense forest and dense undergrowth.

94. Can you give the Committee any idea as to the numbers of miners that are working this area of reserved blocks—that is, 51 to 81 inclusive?—I cannot tell from memory.

95. Well, say approximately: is it one or two thousand?—I have looked at the statistics, and find there have been about 1,433 last year.

96. *Hon. Mr. Seddon.*] You were many years yourself, Mr. Gordon, on the West Coast as mine-manager and in other capacities?—Yes, from about 1865 to 1883.