

mining was looked upon as the predominant industry on the West Coast. It would never do to give freeholds on this account.

135. Would it be sufficient to serve mining interests to cut narrow strips of land alongside and through the several creeks that run through these blocks?—No, it would not. On the top of several hills between Callaghan's and Nelson Creek there is very good gold-bearing drift; in fact, it pays them to wash it in the ordinary manner in some places.

136. Mr. Lord told us the proper way was to keep to the creeks?—It would never do. The creeks run across the line of gold, and every creek and every watercourse washes away a certain amount of fine sediment. The heavier particles are left behind, and the gold has been obtained richer in the beds of the creeks than elsewhere; but the whole country is auriferous.

137. Has it not been proved that where you get gold in the creeks the terraces are also gold-bearing?—Yes, in general.

138. As to this working, "one man one acre," if a man is driving or tunnelling he may run through 50 or 60 acres in a year—that is, if it is narrow?—No.

139. How many acres would he drive through?—Not one in the year if he was tunnelling.

140. Would you get a tunnel driven for about 3s. a foot?—Yes; in some instances, less than that.

141. If he was driving a narrow drive, how many chains would he drive in a year?—When you once get in 1,000ft. you cannot go far.

142. Has it not been proved, at Kumara, for instance, and other places, that for years ground which was deemed non-payable has since proved to be payable?—Some of it I have been told about, but it is a thing I cannot give from my own knowledge.

143. What amount were mine-men making in the early days per week?—If you refer to wages, in the early days I have paid as high as £5 a week; and men are very glad to work for £3 a week now.

144. Now do you know any men that are glad to work for £1 10s. a week?—Plenty of them, and less than that.

145. Then it would not be at all outside the question to say that nearly the whole of this ground, with water on it, would give over £1 a week?—If you had plenty of water it would be very poor land that would not give that. The patches would be remarkably small that would not yield that amount.

146. You said we could not get evidence to enable us to curtail the reserves. What do you mean by that?—What I mean by that is that I should not like to be the surveyor that was sent out to cut up that land and to say which was auriferous and which was not auriferous. I believe that the whole of it is auriferous to a certain extent, and if there was a good supply of water on it there is hardly any of it that would not be made to pay.

147. Then it would be a good thing for the surveyor, but no service to the country?—No service to the colony whatever.

148. I should say that in a great many instances land that has been taken up has interfered so much with mining that compensation has had to be paid?—That is the question of selling the lowlands. In Otago the sum of £10,000 has been paid.

149. In your opinion, would the sale of the lowlands—that is, the flat lands at Arnold Flat—mean ultimately our paying compensation?—Yes.

150. It would not be conducive to sell that land?—It would not be conducive to mining to alienate this land for settlement.

151. What was the correct area that the company were to select from?—5,913,200 odd acres.

152. What was the total value?—£3,127,999 odd.

153. Well, then, there was nearly two-thirds of the land within the area that the company could not select from. Whilst they had this large area of six millions they only appear to select in value one-third of it?—About that—perhaps a little over.

154. Take, then, 750,000 acres that was to be made mining reserves, there is still a large area left to the company?—Yes.

155. The same answer would apply when, in 1885, the whole of this 6,000,000 acres was set aside for the company to select from, although they could not select the whole of it?—I take it that was so, or that they could select 2,500,000 acres.

156. We come to this question of the Black Ball. Turn to section 16 of the contract. Now, there is a special provision made for the company only to have a right to select the leases?—Yes.

157. The company applies to select the block land. B1, Block 220, was that objected to?—Yes, by every one down there—by the miners, by the Warden, and by the Inspector of Mines.

158. That objection was made under section 29. Was there a large body of miners working on that land?—Yes; judging from the reports of the departmental officers there are persons working there at the present time.

159. Is it proved to be payable-auriferous?—Yes; water-races have been constructed there, and a large sum of money spent.

160. Did the Government have any protest from the company as to the refusal being unfair?—I have not heard anything said.

161. There was a portion of a flat between Grey River and the coal-leases the company asked for after the reserve had been made, but we excluded that?—Yes.

162. Was inquiry made into that?—Yes, and it was found that there were a number of tunnels and other things there.

163. Did the Warden report on it?—Yes, and the Inspector of Mines. They reported that it was wanted for mining, resident-areas, and that there were mining-works on it.

164. Nelson Creek, Block 74 and part 77: Is it a fact that during the last three months the owners of this freehold land have threatened to stop all mining?—Yes.