

165. They have been sluicing there for years in that district?—Yes.
166. It follows, then, that, having sold this low-lying land, the owners will have to be compensated or the miners must leave their claims?—That is so.
167. Have claims been made?—Yes.
168. In determining their claims do they claim for all improvements as well as the value of the land?—Yes.
169. Well, then, it is not conducive for mining to sell the low-lying lands in this district, between Blocks 51 to 81?—It would be tantamount to stopping mining. You must get an outlet for tailings.
170. *Re* poor ground in reefing district: Is it not a fact that with improved methods of treating low ores, many of these districts are and would become payable?—Yes.
171. Take the width of the ground at Reefton: what is the distance of the ground across? take right angle from any stream or from the railway, what is the distance of the reserves already proclaimed?—The widest portion is about five miles and three-quarters.
172. Has the ground been worked there?—Well, they have been working all over this.
173. Then the whole of that land is required for mining?—Yes, the whole of it.
174. The flat land at Arnold, where Livingstone was prospecting: What would be a sufficient test?—On a big flat like that a hundred shafts would not be sufficient. It is a belt of auriferous country, where there ought to be gold.
175. Let us now turn to section 18 of the contract. What would be in your opinion a fair value for this land with the timber standing on it?—That would depend upon the quantity and quality of timber that is standing on it.
176. Mr. Lord has fixed it as being worth £1 an acre with the timber standing on it?—I do not think I should like to give that for it, that is, taking it altogether; I dare say that some of it might be worth that.
177. *Mr. Wilson.*] The land and timber?—Yes.
178. *Hon. Mr. Seddon.*] What is the value of the land with the timber taken off it?—Very little indeed. There is a great deal of that country that will not grow anything when the timber is taken off it. Some of this land might be of value after it is cultivated for years and years.
179. You say the timber is really the value of the land?—Yes, the timber is the value.
180. The company have a right to take the timber?—Yes, that is so, with the consent of the Queen.
181. Have they made any application to take the timber?—Not that I am aware of; they have made no application.
182. I will now draw your attention to section 33. You were here when the contract was made?—Yes.
183. Now, after reading that clause, I want to hear your opinion, if that will meet the case in reference to small areas in Westland?—Yes, I think that will meet the case, and any lands that are not actually required for gold-mining purposes, there can be no objection to granting them.

TUESDAY, 30TH AUGUST, 1892.

H. A. GORDON further examined.

184. *Hon. Mr. Seddon.*] What was the nature of the expert evidence taken by the Government before the reserves were made, and as to the reserves about to be made for mining purposes or for purposes incidental or conducive thereto?—We have taken the opinion of the Commissioners of Crown Lands, the Wardens of the different districts, the County Councils, the Miners' Associations, and the District Surveyors.
185. With reference to the reserves from Greymouth to the Nelson District, or the South-west Goldfields, have the Government made the reserves recommended by the experts, or are they much less?—The reserves are much less than were recommended.
186. What acreage was recommended by the experts to be reserved for mining purposes?—It was over 900,000 acres.
187. Where did the proposed plans come from showing the 900,000 acres?—The Nelson and South-west Goldfields reserves were laid off by the Chief Surveyor; the Crown Lands Commissioner of Nelson; Mr. Montgomery, District Surveyor; and Mr. Snodgrass, of the Buller.
188. After taking further evidence, reductions were made to how much—from those that are made and proposed to be made?—They were cut down by 200,000 acres to bring them to the 750,000 acres.
189. What would be the reserves south of the Grey?—It brought up the total reserves from Westland down to Nelson to over 900,000 acres—that is, the whole of the West Coast.
190. You say it was brought down from 900,000, as recommended by them in Nelson, to 750,000 acres?—It was brought down in area to the Government reserves.
191. It was brought down to what is shown on the map?—Yes; I cannot tell the areas, but they are all marked off. [List handed to witness.] It was brought down to 605,790 acres.
192. So that, if the Government were to proclaim every block recommended, that would bring it to 605,790 acres?—Yes.
193. The amount proclaimed at the time objection was lodged is how much?—174,503 acres.
194. That is the acreage out of the 750,000?—That is the acreage. There are 77,303 acres in Westland, and 97,200 acres in the Nelson District proclaimed.
195. Were you correct in saying the other day that there are 5,913,200 acres of land within the area over which the company has the right of selection—that is, including the mining reserves?—Yes.