

223. You referred to the reserve made at Jackson's, and stated that there was a flourishing company working there which had put up a large plant at great expense?—I did not say that it was a flourishing company.

224. I will withdraw the word "flourishing," and say that the company had spent a large sum of money upon an important plant?—Yes.

225. Are you aware that the company is in liquidation, and that the plant is offered for sale?—Yes.

226. How far are the reefs from the railway?—Between a mile and half a mile from the route.

227. If the reefs are a mile away from the line you could not say the mining reserve was made right down to the railway itself?—You could not take the actual workings of the mine, for if the ground turned out well other claims would be taken up along it.

228. Are there other reefs there?—There are a great many quartz-reefs upon that range.

229. Was it not proved to be an absolute duffer?—Some very nice specimens of gold have been found in that part. It is no criterion as to the reef being payable when it is opened at the top. Sometimes people spend money on machinery and do not spend money on the ground to properly prospect it.

230. Do you not think the company had thoroughly prospected the reef before putting up the machinery?—No; they did not prospect the reef.

231. Is there any proved ground between that point and the railway?—There is some ground close to the river, but I do not think it would interfere with mining.

232. Is there not a piece of ground made in this mining reserve which is very likely to prove valuable for a township?—That is possible. There is some land near Jackson's, if a station was constructed alongside of it.

233. Why was the block at Kaimata reduced in size after the plan was sent to the company?—I think the first time the plan was reduced in size was to bring it in the natural boundary. I do not think the mining went so far.

234. Did you get direct evidence from the miners as to the likeliness of the block being required?—Yes.

235. You visited the miners on the line and asked them various questions, and that was the principal evidence?—No; I also saw people in Greymouth.

236. Did the reserve at Kaimata also include a block taking part of the frontage of the lake—a block of about 2,000 acres?—I do not recollect if the block did go right to the lake.

237. Yes, and included frontage on the lake?—I cannot carry my memory back.

238. It was ultimately applied for as a recreation-ground for Greymouth, and opposed by the company and withdrawn?—I do not know anything about that.

239. Are you aware of any suggestion, at the time the company objected to this being made a recreation-ground, to the effect that it might possibly be included in a mining reserve and then made a recreation-reserve?—I know nothing about the recreation reserve at all.

240. In cross-examination I think you said the company never protested in any way against the mining reserves being made. You are not aware that the company has made a formal objection against all mining reserves, on the ground that they are against the spirit of the contract?—I do not know as to that. I think they may have done so. I have never seen any protest against the reserves block for block as proclaimed.

241. You have possibly confused that fact with the statement that the company did not object to reserves being made near mining centres when made in reasonable amount?—What I mean to say is that you did not protest against the reserves when you got notice that they were going to be made.

242. You stated that all mining, in your opinion, would have ceased if the reserves from 51 to 81 had not been made?—I did not state that. What I implied was that all mining, not on the coast, but in the Grey Valley, would have been stopped.

243. You stated that no person would have been allowed to take any land in the blocks for settlement, even before the company had included it as available for settlement?—Well, some people have got land, and it has been a great trouble to the miners, on account of the compensation that has to be paid.

244. Can you offer any explanation to the Committee as to why the company was allowed the right of selecting under the contract any of this land?—I do not know whether the company has any right of selection of this very land.

245. Then, how do you account for the alternate-block system along that very line being passed?—The alternate-block system has been done away with.

246. You said before the company had any right to it at all—you said distinctly that before 1885 the land was considered so valuable for mining that it would not have been sold?—Well, take it that way. I do not think the land ought to have been given away.

247. That is a matter of your personal opinion?—Yes.

248. If the Government had consulted you, you would not have recommended the company to take the land?—No, I would not.

249. I think the Minister asked the question, and you stated that the terraces near the creeks generally prove payably auriferous. Is it not a fact that the ground gets poorer as you recede from the creek-beds?—In some places it does, and there is a reason for that. What I said before was that the creek-beds being at nearly right angles to the leads, the material got concentrated, the fine light stuff was washed away, and the gold left behind. Although the land itself is poor, it contains sufficient to pay if worked in the modern systematic way with plenty of water.

250. You said that the miners in the early days who earned £5 a week were content to work for £1 10s. now. Does this account for the falling-away of population on the coast?—It accounts for the decrease in mining so far as the actual number of people engaged.