

tormented by being charged royalties on land and in getting residence-sites, and these are the reasons why the reserves ought to be made.

316. Do you not think it would have been a better plan to reserve the land where the miners are actually at work and the land in the immediate vicinity, and sell the rest for settlement, with the condition that the applicant should advertise for, say, one or two months his intention to select; and if miners or others objected on the ground of the land being wanted or likely to be wanted, then the question to be settled by the Warden or Mines Commissioner; and if decided against the objectors, then the land to be proclaimed; otherwise, the land to be sold and dealt with by the company as portion of their area, and disposed of for settlement purposes?—I do not hold with that, for if you made an application it would be some person's business to inquire into it, and, unless some objection was made, the land might be selected and given up. Twelve months after gold might be found on it, and compensation would have to be paid. Time after time the Government would have to take the land and pay compensation for improvements. I do not think it is advisable to alienate it.

317. Your opinion is that payable gold may be found on it, although at the time of the application there might be nothing to indicate that there was any chance of gold being there?—Yes; the land might be taken up and the Government called upon to resume it.

318. *Hon. Mr. Seddon.*] Would that not cause constant friction on account of the miners having to object?—Every one would be in hot water.

319. Would not the cost of advertising be a great expense to the people wanting the land?—Yes.

320. Would it not tend to "spotting" by speculators?—I do not think the value of the land for settlement is so great that there is much chance of "spotting." If a man got a few acres he would not want much more.

321. But would not mining speculators "spot" the land for mining purposes?—It is possible that it would be taken up and held for mining.

322. *Mr. Shera.*] Have you any idea of the extent of the agricultural or pastoral land open for selection in Canterbury?—I could not exactly tell the area. It is on the map. It is a very large area, but I could not tell without adding up the figures.

323. Are there 2,000,000 acres?—There are 1,169,700 acres, valued at £568,649.

324. Do you recollect the extent that the company has already selected in Canterbury?—It is 247,650 acres, valued at £141,250.

325. At what rate has that been selected—10s., or at a valuation?—It is all at different prices. It goes from 10s. to £1.

326. Can you produce answers from the County Councils to the circulars sent to them with regard to the mining reserves?—I can. (See Appendix, pages 24–8.)

327. *The Chairman.*] Is it your opinion that the company should not be allowed to take these lands, notwithstanding that they may not be proved to be auriferous or otherwise, it being inferred that the company must suffer if not allowed to take them?—I say that such a large portion is known to be auriferous that there is very little that, with modern appliances and a good way of working, would not pay to work, and therefore I say they ought not to be given away.

328. Is it your opinion that the company should not have these lands as part of its grant, because it is necessary to wait in order to ascertain whether auriferous leads will be found upon them?—I do not think there is any doubt about it. I think it is beyond question that, unless you want to stop mining entirely, or to confine it to the places where miners are actually working now, you are bound to keep that land as fresh land to be available when the other is done.

329. Would it not be profitable for the colony to allow settlement to proceed on doubtful land rather than keep it open for mining on the chance of it containing payable gold?—As far as the reserves down the Grey Valley are concerned I think it would be better. The mining people can live, but if they took the land up for settlement it would very soon ruin them.

330. You think it would be better to keep it open for mining?—Yes.

331. Have any of these mining reserves been surveyed? If not, how have the boundaries been fixed?—No actual survey has been made. They were all fixed by the surveyors on the plan, and likewise by men who know the trigs. and almost every acre of the country.

WEDNESDAY, 31st AUGUST.—(MR. J. M. SHERA in the Chair.)

Mr. H. ALAN SCOTT in attendance and examined.

1. *Mr. Wilson.*] Were you one of the delegates sent by the colony to England to induce capitalists to take up the construction of the East and West Coast and Nelson Railway?—Yes; I was one of the delegates sent Home by a syndicate of persons in Canterbury and Nelson who had what I might call a nominal contract with the Government under "The East and West Coast and Nelson Railway Act, 1884," which contract was put forward by the then Government and the people of the districts interested as the readiest means of inducing capitalists in London to take up the construction of the railway. I have ever since been connected with the New Zealand Midland Railway Company as its general manager, or land manager, and in other capacities.

2. Had you any difficulty in getting financiers in London to consider the proposals and inducements offered under the contract with the Government?—It was not an easy task by any means: it took eighteen months to negotiate; the circumstances were rather adverse.

3. Then you did not find that there was a very keen competition on the part of financiers to get hold of the scheme?—Scarcely; it was a very difficult task to carry out.

4. Is it a fact that you had to set out all the inducements before it was possible to get financiers to look at it at all?—Yes.