

indicated. The boundaries of the reserves were set forth in the Proclamation made by Mr. Larnach, which, of course, was gazetted, and a plan accompanied the Proclamation. In fact, it was public property on the Coast and in Parliament at the time, and the area stated was 750,000 acres. As regards paragraph I, referring to 20,000 acres as being worked for mining purposes on the West Coast, I say that that is altogether incorrect; that the gold-workings on the Coast extend almost from the Nelson Bight right down to Jackson's Bay. In Westland alone the gold-workings extend a distance of over 300 miles. Our gold-workings run parallel with the beach, taking a given distance back. First of all you have the beach-line, then you have auriferous drifts, and in the ranges you have the feeders to the old leads. From Jackson's Bay you have auriferous land; and to say that 20,000 acres would cover all, including the area acquired for tail-races and dams and water-races, is altogether incorrect. In August, 1888, Mr. Salt made a statement that there were 50,000 acres of gold-workings. Now the total area given has been reduced by 30,000 acres. I simply say at once that to make a statement of that kind is misleading and absolutely incorrect.

Mr. Wilson: Worked out. There is a difference between "worked" and "worked out."

Hon. Mr. Seddon: It is never worked out. No one can tell what is below. The land is required for tail-races and other purposes. I say that the whole of the land reserved, following the coast-line and the rivers up the Grey Valley, with the slight exceptions mentioned, is absolutely required for mining purposes. Now, as to the population of the West Coast increasing or decreasing, my answer to that is this: that the workings are increasing; the yield of gold is increasing; that, with water-races on a large scale, and the improvements in machinery now taking place, while there may be a lesser population—which I deny is the case—there will be a greater output of gold, and with the workings on a larger scale there will be a greater necessity for enlarged areas to work on. As regards paragraph K, the prospecting which has gone on has been of a special character, and there has been little of it. Claims have been proved to be payable in later days that were declared to be "duffers" in former times. Splendid prospects have been got, and parties are working, and proof has been given that the mines are being worked with payable results. With regard to the land covering coal areas, that will refer to Blackball and Reefton. In these particular cases the lands were reserved under the contract with the company. We have not interfered with them. But it has been proved incontestably that we find coal and gold together. Sometimes the gold is on top of the coal, and sometimes the coal is on top of the gold. The gold is much more valuable than the coal, which is of a poor quality at Reefton, and would not pay for working. It would be different if the coal were of better quality, and there was a better market. The only market is Reefton itself, and the coal simply counts for nothing. As regards Blackball and Section 220, the advice given to the Government has been very clear. Developments have already taken place, and it will probably be one of the largest gold-workings in the colony. A large population is settling there, and I think the reserve is really in the interest of the gold-mining population. The coal is difficult to work, and the matter hung fire for some time; but a company has now taken it up, and has got the money. I would point out that, while the company had the right of selection there for four or five years, they never exercised that right until a month or two ago. If they really thought that as a coal-field it was very valuable, it is strange that they never thought fit to make the selection before. The company had the right of selection over Block 220 for the last five years.

Mr. Wilson: The fact that we had the right of selection during that time did not do away with our right of selecting it at any time we liked.

TUESDAY, 13TH SEPTEMBER, 1892.

Hon. R. J. SEDDON attended and continued his statement.

Hon. Mr. Seddon: I produce a letter from the Grey County Council in reference to Blocks 80 and 91, which include the Black Ball Reserve. [See Appendix, pages 31, 32.] Mr. Wilson's contention on behalf of the company is that we can only take 10,000 acres in any B1 block at a time. On reference to the maps you will find there are any number of B1 blocks with less than 10,000 acres. There are not 10,000 acres in the block referred to, and we cannot take them if they are not there. I desire to refer now to part B of the petition. My answer to paragraph (a) is that the statement is entirely incorrect. We have done nothing of the kind. The words used there are "mining reserves." There is no such thing as a mining reserve. There are lands reserved for mining purposes, and lands within a mining district. The lands within mining districts have always been under the control of the Wardens, and the Commissioners of Lands have no power under the Mining Acts, and never had. The laws relating to mining have always been dealt with by the Wardens, and I say that, these being reserves for mining purposes under the terms of the contract, and under the Mining Act, it is in the true spirit and intent of the contract that all rights should be applied for to and granted by the Warden. The contract says, "shall be subject to the mining laws for the time being." We adhere to that principle, and, therefore, have taken nothing from the Commissioners of Lands at all. Paragraph (b) is also incorrect, because the Wardens have no power to grant rights to cut timber for other than mining purposes under the mining regulations, and the Government have been very careful that no person shall be allowed to cut timber on these reserves except for mining purposes. Any Warden granting a license to cut timber for any other purpose would be acting contrary to the regulations, and against the law. Lands outside the reserves have been dealt with by the Commissioners of Waste Lands under the terms of the contract. A glance at the regulations will show how carefully this has been guarded, for the Wardens must inquire before granting the applications.

LICENSE TO CUT TIMBER.

261. *Permission to cut Timber.*—Any hand-sawyer, splitter, or wood-cutter desiring to cut timber for sale for *bond fide* mining purposes, or for any purpose incidental or conducive thereto, shall make application to the Warden for permission in the form in Schedule 42 hereto, and a copy of such application shall be posted for seven days outside