

609. Did Perotti have a mill?—No.

610. Not at Devil's Creek?—Not that I am aware of.

611. Do you think the mills that were in existence before the railway was made are cutting more timber now than before the railway was made?—The local mills have increased; they have had to cut a very large and increased quantity of timber for local demands. The Consolidated Company alone keeps two of them going.

612. Coming towards Greymouth, do they send any timber over the railway at present?—I think the only timber they send away is railway-sleepers.

613. Do you know whether the railway derives any revenue from them, or whether they are carried free of charge?—I know the cartage on them to the railway is a matter for the contractor.

614. I mean so far as the railway revenue is concerned?—Of course, I do not know.

615. Are you of opinion that considerable areas of land will be settled on now that the restrictions are removed in the Reefton district?—Taking into account the development of the coal industry, and the timber industry, and the gold-mining industry, necessarily a larger population will prevail, and, of course, settlement also. I have no reason to see why there should not be. As I have already said, I think cyanide will be an immense factor in the development of the gold-mining industry.

616. What you wish the Commission to understand is that with cyanide and the advent of capital to develop the mining industry settlers in the Inangahua Valley would have a good local market in Reefton, which would render settlement in that valley profitable?—Yes. There would be a larger mining population—miners and, of course, their families.

617. *Mr. McKerrow.*] You stated that in the course of the next ten years the coal output might be 1,000,000 tons per annum?—I did not go into figures; that is a haphazard statement.

618. Do you know what is the annual output from all the coal-mines in New Zealand?—I have not gone into the figures.

619. I may inform you it is not 1,000,000 tons?—It was a haphazard guess, and I had better withdraw it now. I cannot say the output without going into calculations.

620. *Mr. Hudson.*] In the event of the output being under what you have already stated, would you not require to reduce the number of men you think the industry will employ?—I do not know. I have already admitted making a mistake in the output, or, at least, I have assumed that the quantity will be larger than it probably will be.

621. In one part of your evidence you told us that you anticipated that five or six mines of equal size to the Blackball Coal-mine would be working, and that the Blackball employs two hundred miners?—Yes; I believe that is so.

622. And therefore you anticipate that about a thousand men will be employed near Reefton?—Yes; but I think that is excessive. I would be very glad, as a resident, at all events, if half the number were employed there. It would make a vast difference to the success and prosperity of the district.

623. *Mr. Graham.*] With reference to your statements generally in regard to the conveyance of goods before and after the railway opened, these are just your general impressions: you have not got them from any authorised data?—They are my recollections. Of course, having been a resident of the district, and having had to pay freight, I can approximate it.

624. What do you mean by approximating it?—I can say from memory.

625. That the freight was higher or lower?—Yes.

626. But you cannot say if it was £8 or £10 per ton, instead of 16s. per ton?—Yes; I can say that. I do know that as legal manager of companies.

627. *The Chairman.*] Was machinery carried by weight, or by measurement?—By weight; but, of course, as you know, in the early days of the field there were no roads at all.

628. What do you say of ten or fifteen years ago: my own impression is that freight was £5 per ton?—Before the advent of the railway it was about £5 per ton.

629. How long ago was living in Reefton 30 or 40 per cent. higher than it is now?—Fifteen or twenty years ago.

630. What do you pay at the hotels now?—You can get accommodation now for £1 per week.

631. You mean permanent residence?—Yes; regular boarders.

632. Is the amount paid by the commercial traveller 40 per cent. less than it was twenty years ago?—I would not say 40 per cent.

633. Would you say 30 per cent.?—I would say it was quite 30 per cent.

634. These are simply your impressions?—I am not prepared to give actual statements. They are my impressions of what I know of the past.

635. *Mr. Fraser.*] Do I understand you to mean that the cost of living for residents in Reefton and the neighbourhood is 40 per cent. less than it was twenty years ago?—Yes.

THOMAS PAVITT examined on oath.

636. *The Chairman.*] What is your occupation?—I am a land agent at present.

637. Residing where?—At Greymouth.

638. *Dr. Findlay.*] Before you came to the West Coast I understand you were carrying on business in Christchurch?—Yes.

639. For how many years?—Nearly thirty years.

640. In what business?—Timber and coal.

641. You conducted, I understand, a very large timber business?—Yes.

642. And also a large coal business?—Yes.

643. You imported timber from the west coast of this Island?—Yes.

644. In considerable quantities when you were in Christchurch?—Yes.