

1240. Where?—Lanky's Creek, about four miles from Reefton.
1241. Did you employ your son to prospect?—Yes, that is only recently.
1242. The prospecting was in the coal-measures north of Reefton?—Yes.
1243. From the result of his prospecting, and from the inquiries you have made, and from your local knowledge, can you say whether or not there are extensive coal-measures beyond Reefton?—I have no doubt of it myself—very extensive measures, judging from the outcrops.
1244. What class of coal is it?—A splendid coal; a very free-burning coal, bright and hard—splendid household coal.
1245. Do you think that, if a light line were constructed by either a coal company or private enterprise of some other kind to the terminus at Reefton, these measures would be developed?—I am quite certain they would.
1246. How many miles would it require to be?—To the outcrops I speak of it would be between five and six miles. They are to the west of the river.
1247. You know something of the timber area?—Yes.
1248. You have made an examination of the forests in the valley of the Inangahua?—Yes.
1249. Can you say whether there is a large or small area there?—There is a large area of really first-class timber, commencing about eight miles north of Reefton and extending down to the Junction—about thirteen miles of good timber running all the way.
1250. Could you give me any idea of the breadth?—I should say from two and a half to three miles, and more in places.
1251. Are there any other forests besides those?—There are forests near Reefton.
1252. Where are they?—On the Westland side of the river.
1253. What area, roughly, in miles?—About four or five miles in length, and about a mile and a half wide.
1254. Is this all good forest?—Fair forest.
1255. All the timber down to Inangahua is also good forest?—Yes.
1256. What does the timber consist of?—There are all classes of timber—birch, black-pine, red-pine, totara, and some silver-pine.
1257. Confining ourselves to these two classes—coal and timber—do you think, if the Government does not extend the line beyond Reefton, that private enterprise will connect the terminus with these forests and coal-measures?—I think it will. It has already been proposed to connect with the outcrops.
1258. If that connection were made, do you know any reason why the timber should not be brought from these forests to Greymouth?—I see no reason; it has already been carried about fifteen miles. Silver-pine sleepers have already been carried from close to the landing in to the Reefton Station—taken by carts.
1259. How many miles?—Fifteen miles.
1260. Then, I may make the inference: Do you think a very large coal and timber industry can be expected north of Reefton?—Yes.
1261. The whole of it would go over the Reefton line?—Yes.
1262. You have been a gold-miner and mine-manager?—Yes.
1263. You know the history of most of the mining that has been carried on at Reefton?—Yes.
1264. Do you know that a very large area in total of abandoned mines exists around Reefton?—Yes, a great many.
1265. Do you know whether there is a reasonable prospect of the bulk of those areas being worked again with the use of cyanide?—Yes; and with more capital I think they are bound to be worked.
1266. Have you any illustrations to give the Commission of that being bound to happen in fact?—There is a mine now up at Crushington, the Keep-it-Dark. They could not make it pay until they adopted cyanide; now they are paying regular dividends.
1267. Cyanide, we have been told, is in its infancy up there?—It has not been adopted very long.
1268. You really are of opinion that cyanide will be employed to bring into work a great many of these abandoned mines?—I have no doubt it will.
1269. Are there any reefs which have not been opened up there?—Yes.
1270. Do you look for any marked improvement of the gold-mining industry?—Yes; I think it is only in its infancy at Reefton. I think, with cyanide and capital, that the industry will more than double itself within the next few years.
1271. Do you know what kind of land these forests are growing on—whether on the removal of the timber it will be suitable for pastoral purposes?—Yes; nearly all the timber land will be suitable for pastoral purposes, and some of it is suitable for cropping. There is some really excellent land near the Junction. It commences about twelve miles from Reefton and runs down to the Junction.
1272. It is at present under bush?—Yes.
1273. Which, if cleared, would be available for cropping?—Yes.
1274. If the timber were removed, would there be a larger area for sowing grass?—Yes.
1275. What area in miles?—Right from Reefton down to the Junction—twenty-one miles.
1276. Do you think it would grow grass profitably?—Yes.
1277. Then, the development of the timber industry would mean as a consequence largely increased settlement?—It would assist.
1278. You have been enabled to contrast the cost of living in Reefton from time to time during the time you have been there: do you know how the cost of living in Reefton compares now with the cost of living at the time the railway began?—I should say it is 40 per cent. cheaper now than it was then.