

race?—I do not think the water at the terminal works at Humphrey's Gully to the Back Creek would cost less than £60,000 myself. The siphon there would be necessarily a very big item.

51. This is not a new project; the Government themselves have got a complete report regarding it somewhere?—No; it is not new, because we have been urging it with all the power we have for the last ten years. I believe this is the only goldfield in New Zealand that has not received some substantial consideration at the hands of the Government of the day towards its development.

52. You have a number of shafts put down to show what prospects you have at the back?—Yes.

53. And the results of these shafts being put down go to show that it is all payable sluicing-ground?—Yes; I do not think there can be any doubt as to the payableness and extent of the ground as a goldfield.

54. Is there sufficient fall to carry your tail-races from the river, going a distance back?—Yes; you have the whole of the flat between the present river boundary and the terrace itself, and there is a splendid fall—I should think quite equal to that of Kumara into the Teremakau River.

55. The length of the Kumara race is a mile and a quarter, and you would take it a mile and a quarter back?—Yes; but it would take many years to work the front part of the terraces.

56. Take the up-stream part of Seddon Terrace down to Brighton Terrace, what is the distance?—The field has not been developed in the upper portion at all, owing to the entire absence of water. From the present workings I should think it would be two miles and a half.

57. At all events there is a frontage to the river of proved works for a couple of miles.—Yes, fully.

58. And a fall in the river to allow you to go back for a mile?—Yes.

59. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Supposing the scheme was carried out, what effect would it have on the Hokitika town?—I do not think the effect on the town would be felt for a great many years—perhaps never—the distance is so great. It is eight or nine miles away. It would be only the finer silt that would go into the river. I think the greater part of it would go out into the ocean. As a matter of fact I do not think thirty years' working has affected the Hokitika River much. The depth of the water in the river itself is as great as it was twenty or thirty years ago.

60. You would have exactly similar results to those in the Teremakau?—I do not think so, because the workings in the Kumara are right on the river. I should not think the heavy tailings would reach the river at Hokitika for the next fifteen or twenty years. Each fresh would take nine-tenths of the finer tailings or silt pretty well to sea.

61. Of course it would have an injurious effect on the Hokitika Harbour?—Well, we have to take our risk of that. We would rather be washed away than die away for want of the water-supply.

62. Is this field you mention all held under claims?—The whole of that the Premier referred to has been taken up in claims, but part of it has been abandoned owing to no water being available. The centre part is now being worked, and the upper portion is all Crown land. That is the reason why we say it would carry an increased population if the water was there.

63. What is held in claims—is it protected or open?—One large claim is held, but most of the country is open for selection. That is to say, miners can take it up, and the moment it is known that water is going to be taken through it, the whole of that flat and the higher part of the country will be pegged out.

64. Are any of those claims held under protection?—One claim is held by Grimmond and party.

65. They are the same people who tried to float a company?—Yes; and failed.

66. Do you know the reason why?—I think the reason was that people were not satisfied that the water from the lake was high enough, and had sufficient pressure for the whole of the field.

67. What is the estimated cost of bringing water to Back Creek?—I think the Consolidated Company estimated the cost at £50,000 to £60,000, if they took it up; but if the Consolidated Company will not take it up I do not think it could be done at all from the Arahura River or Humphrey's Gully.

68. What would be the cost of bringing it from the Arahura River?—If the water had to be taken straight from the Arahura itself to the field, the cost would be very much greater. If the present works in connection with the Humphrey's Gully or Consolidated Company are not utilised I fear the work will never be undertaken, but I am hopeful that if a substantial sum were placed on the estimates for the purpose we might get them to make the necessary extension.

69. *Right Hon. Mr. Seddon.*] What is the extent of Grimmond and party's claim?—100 acres.

70. And they have done nothing with it?—They took it up, presumably, thinking they would float their company, and that the ground would prove a very valuable asset, and no doubt it will.

71. Would it be an inducement to any other company if the Government were to do what it is proposed to do at Ross Flat?—Yes; but I think 100 acres is too much. It would be very good for the people who got it; but looking at it from a colonial as well as a local point of view, we are anxious to see more people on the field.

72. Would you rather have a better subsidy and let the ground be cut up and worked by the miners?—Yes; but I would like to see one claim reserved. The miners would only probably work eight hours a day, and a company might wish to have night water utilised.

73. Do they work at Humphrey's Gully at night?—Yes; they work the twenty-four hours. It is very low-grade stuff that they are putting through. You will see by the cables this morning that the Humphrey's Gully Company has been absorbed by the English Consolidated.

74. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] You said you preferred to see the holdings made small: would not the effect be the same if the water was utilised?—We want to see as many men get good employment as possible, especially if we are going to look upon it as a colonial venture.