

at a very considerable expense, something like £2,000, with the view of showing where any large supply of water could be obtained for the various gold fields in the County of Westland. The surveys have been completed, and the courses of the various large races as proposed, are now indicated by pegs. Maps have been prepared, showing the proposed line of the races; and specifications have likewise been prepared; showing the probable cost of each work, the amount of water which each race would carry, and the nature of the ground over which the races would have to pass. In addition to this, the water has been gauged at the proposed sources of supply; and I have no doubt but that, if the capital was forthcoming to construct some of the proposed works, the County of Westland could maintain at least four times the number of miners at present working there, and that they would be profitably employed. My object in moving the resolution in the Council was, that I foresaw that there would be considerable difficulty in raising sufficient private capital to carry out the works, and I anticipated that the Government would eventually take the matter in hand. As far as my calculations have gone, I am under the impression that if from £60,000 to £70,000 were expended under the head of "water supply" for Westland, it might be made reproductive to a very large extent, and that it would return interest at the rate of at least 25 per cent. per annum. I put that as the lowest estimate. I believe that the majority of the miners are perfectly willing to pay a small sum weekly for the supply of water, and that many thousands of acres are at the present time lying idle in consequence of the want of sufficient supply of water, which ground is known to be payable in the event of water being supplied. The proposed water-races I have alluded to can be brought in at comparatively high levels, and will each carry from 50 to 100 Government heads, of 40 inches to the head. I am further of opinion that the supply of water would be continuous, and that the number of heads I have mentioned might be counted upon to a certainty.

93. Is the proposed expenditure you recommend of £60,000 or £70,000 sufficient for the whole of the present requirements of the County of Westland?—No; that sum would barely construct three of the proposed races. I think the levels of five races have been taken, being one for the requirements of each large district in the County. The names of the districts which have been surveyed are Waimea, Greenstone, Kanieri, Totara, and Okarito. I may mention that to the south of Okarito there is a very extensive district proved to be gold-bearing, and on which only a few diggers are at present engaged. The County authorities are now taking steps to establish settlements along the coast in that direction, so that water-races will eventually be required.

94. What steps have been taken on the western coast to promote permanent settlement?—The County authorities are taking steps for the formation of settlements in the southern portion of the County, such settlement scheme to be based upon the Otago settlement scheme, but with modifications, as there have been found to be defects in the Otago Act. We propose to set apart large tracts of land in several classes, one portion of which is proposed to be given as free grants to settlers, one condition being that of permanent occupation for a period of years. Other blocks will be sold at a low rate, the price being sufficient to pay the cost of survey, &c. The first settlement under this scheme will probably be in the vicinity of the Haast River, where a large tract of agricultural land is known to exist.

95. Is the quantity of produce grown in the County of Westland materially on the increase?—Yes; the garden produce is quite sufficient for the wants of the County, and a considerable number of small farms are in occupation, and being cultivated in all directions. The one drawback to the success of farming is the want of roads to convey produce to the centres of population. I am informed, for instance, that the cost of conveying such articles as potatoes to the Hokitika market from some farms only a distance of six or seven miles up the Hokitika River, is as great as would be the cost of freight and shipping expenses, from any of the ports in Australia.

96. *Mr. Macfarlane.*] Can you say how much?—I cannot state exactly the amount, but I know that a deputation waited upon the County Chairman and represented the above facts.

97. *The Chairman.*] Has any attempt been made to constitute Road Boards?—Yes; there are Road Boards throughout the County, under which rates are struck and collected; but the principal difficulty in collecting a sufficient sum for any practical purpose is this, that it is exceedingly difficult to rate mining property, except on an old-established gold field, where large plant is required in working the ground. I may state that, for the last two years, all our available prison labour has been engaged in the construction of roads.

98. Is there any practical suggestion you could make in reference to associating the working of the auriferous sands with the occupancy of small farms, such a course having been recommended to the Committee by Dr. Hector?—I think that such a principle would be most objectionable and pernicious for several reasons, one of which is that in the event of any of the large water-races being completed as proposed, the whole of the beaches would be worked in comparatively small claims, and would afford remunerative employment for a large mining population. The second objection is, that in all the settled districts, the land immediately adjoining the beach has already been sold, as that land is more sought after by agriculturists in consequence of the fertility of the soil and the fact of its being more lightly timbered than that on the terraces.

99. Are you acquainted with the coal regions of Westland?—Yes.

100. Can you make any practical suggestions with the view to their speedy development?—I may state that a coal reserve of 2,500 acres has been made up the Grey River, at a point about seven miles from its mouth—that several companies have been formed to work the mine—but the difficulty of raising sufficient capital has hitherto prevented the development of that branch of industry. The coal is of the most superior quality, probably the best in the world. Recent analysis shows this to be the case. The seam, which is in some places 20 feet thick, can be easily worked, the seam lying horizontally immediately above high water-mark of the river. The principal difficulty has hitherto been that a tramway or railway is required to bring the coal to the seaport. The probable cost of such a tramway or railway would be about £25,000. The expense would depend on the nature of the road to be constructed. The same seam of coal has been proved recently to extend in a southerly direction, and to exist at a point situated some eight or nine miles above Hokitika. This portion of the seam