

men who gave me this information owned claims varying in extent from three to seventeen acres, and they have work before them for terms varying from four to twenty-five years. I may say, moreover, that the Warden of the district, Mr. Charles Broad, on the 2nd October, 1876, sent in a report to the Government, in which he very strongly urged the construction of the Four-Mile Race as a matter of public policy, as well as a benefit to the district. And I may say that Mr. Broad is one of the most experienced Wardens in New Zealand. These men held about ninety-seven acres; but about four square miles of country would be commanded by the water if the race were constructed.

4. *Mr. Ireland.*] Is the source sufficient to give an ample supply of water?—Yes.

5. How many Government “heads” of water would it give?—About thirty heads of 20 inches each.

6. *Mr. Hirst.*] Would it enable more ground to be worked?—Yes; a large area.

7. Would there be a fall?—Yes; it is pretty close to the sea, and about 300 feet above it. You could not wish a better fall.

8. *Mr. Seddon.*] Do they work down to the creeks?—They work down to the creeks, and come out again on the beach.

9. *Mr. Reid.*] What was the sum Mr. Macandrew ordered to be placed on the estimates?—I suppose £11,000—the sum recommended by Mr. O'Connor. There is another argument why the Government should do this work—namely, that they are at present maintaining a staff there for the management of the Argyle Race, which they have bought; and the same staff would be sufficient to manage the Four-Mile Race.

10. Could the work be done for less than £11,000?—I do not think so. I imagine that all the Committee can do is to recommend the Government to carry out the scheme.

11. *Mr. Murray.*] Have the petitioners brought their claim before the Government?—Yes, in 1877.

12. What was the nature of the security which the Buller County Council could give for the payment by them of the interest on half the cost of constructing the water-race?—I cannot exactly say, but it was very good security.

13. Why could the County Council not do the work themselves?—Because they have not sufficient funds. The total revenue of the county is only about £4,000 a year.

14. Is this a question of public policy?—No; it is a question of funds. If the County Council had the funds, they would do the work at once.

15. *The Chairman.*] Under the Counties Act, the counties have no power to go into mining enterprises?—No.

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