

suitable for settlement, but I say it is ground we might require. I do not know whether it is good for settlement; there is a good deal of it—some thousands of acres.

44. Evidence has been tendered as to the sinking of shafts in the early days, and that this country has been thoroughly prospected—is that so?—In our district.

45. No?—With the exception of a few chains in front, the terraces, and one or two places where tunnels have been put in—the furthest, I think, about 1,250ft.—with that exception there is scarcely any prospecting done in our riding, or anywhere else that I have been on the West Coast. For instance, on the deep ground lying at the outlets of these creeks and on these flats there have been several attempts at prospecting, but merely attempts. So far they have been failures. The only way of working them is by the improved mode of hydraulics.

46. That is, to create an artificial fall for the tailings?—Yes. We have only one going at Nelson Creek as yet. There would have been more going only for the uncertainty and the trouble with these small farms.

47. Then it would be no criterion, supposing the shafts had been sunk some years ago, that the country had been prospected?—Not at all. Where we have a proper mode of working on anything like an extensive scale we do not trouble ourselves in the least about prospecting. I have turned over acres of ground which might be prospected and not get the colour in it. Then I have had to live out of it and pay wages.

48. Would it do all that was required for the mining industry in your district to take a little strip and reserve that for mining?—Not at all. We are hampered enough already. We should simply have to leave if hampered in that way. We could not get along at all.

49. Which, in your opinion, the mining industry or settlement caused by the company, would promote most the interests of the railway itself?—There need be no difficulty in answering that question. A district settled through the mining industry is thickly settled with an energetic and persevering people, which require everything brought to them. Our export is gold, which we take out of the ground, and is not a bulky one; but our imports are large, and we are wasteful and very ready to travel when we have got the means. We are a sober people also.

50. You say the miners would travel as passengers on the railway more than farmers?—What I say is that a block of 10,000 acres settled as a mining centre would be more conducive to passenger traffic than a block of 10,000 acres settled as a farming centre. That is my opinion. As to goods traffic, the farming district would be better. Farmers would require to have their stuff taken away, but the passenger traffic of the miners would pay best. This applies especially to the coal industry, where a hive of workers settle down.

51. Coming to the timber question, would it be advisable, in your opinion, that the company should have the sole right to the timber?—No; we cannot do without lots of timber. We want the timber reserved as well as the surface-soil. If the company want the timber, then move us out of the country, for we cannot do without it.

52. Is it a necessary requirement?—There is certainly a lot of it. Some regulation might be made as to what should be left for us. But we require a large quantity. Any person going over the West Coast must have noticed that round what are called old workings there is scarcely a tree to be seen anywhere. It has been used up for one purpose or another.

53. Compare the ground that the miners are working now with what they worked when you first came to the Coast; will you state if there is any difference?—In the quantity of gold obtained. In the early days they looked for a prospect, and had no intention of going to any expenditure unless they found one. What we called a prospect then was two or three grains or half a pennyweight to the dish. What we look for now is water, and water prospects. We are contented now if we see two or three colours, and it might require four dishfuls of dirt to make one grain.

54. In other words, you work for £1 10s. a week as against £1 a day in the early days?—Yes, the improved way of working making the difference. There are mining companies which profess to put through a great lot of stuff. About 850 cubic yards a week go through my race when in working order. That work is done by a man and a half. There are not two men regularly employed. One man is at it all the time, and another half the time.

WEDNESDAY, 21ST SEPTEMBER, 1892.

JAMES MILL MORRIS attended and was further examined.

1. *Hon. Mr. Seddon.*] Would it be conducive to quartz-mining if the company were to have the surface of the land, and the claim-owners what was underneath?—Certainly not. The surface of a quartz claim is as necessary for carrying on operations as the underground portion. There are dams, water-races, tailings sites, machine sites, and other things necessary for carrying on the works to be provided for. Besides, if there should be an acre or two of ground within a quartz-mining claim that is fit for settlement of any kind, the workmen require residence sites; so that the surface is as much required as the underground portion to successfully carry on quartz-mining.

2. As a rule, the area has always been larger for quartz-mines than for ordinary alluvial drifts?—Much larger. There are what we call special alluvial claims, and there are cases where the holders of these occupy an area within the pegs of as much ground as a quartz-claim. But these are very few.

3. You referred to Mr. Reeves having asked a question in the House in reference to these reserves. Is this what you refer to [*Hansard*, 5th June, 1888, page 435]: “Mr. R. J. Reeves asked the Minister of Mines and Lands, When the Crown lands situated with the Riding of Nelson Creek, County of Grey, will be proclaimed exempted from the operation of the Midland Railway Company, the same being a well-known goldfield? After the reply to the last question he could only ask the Minister if there was any likelihood of these lands being exempted from the operations of the Midland Railway Act?”—Yes.