

suppose, have been discovered at different times: What about them?—Those leads were all discovered when there was a large population there. They were worked partially, from end to end, at that time.

391. You say there is no possibility of the discovery of any more leads further west towards the sea?—I do not think it is likely.

392. Will you tell me what is the ground of your belief, that it is not likely?—Because the ground has been so well prospected.

393. Have you prospected this portion yourself?—No; but I know people who have.

394. You have been told by people who have been over it?—Yes.

395. You do not know anything of your own knowledge?—No.

395A. And what you say is only from what you have heard?—That is all.

396. At any rate, we may take it, if it is ground that has been so well prospected, that it is such ground as miners thought would probably have leads running through it?—Oh, yes.

397. Do you think the early prospectors have exhausted its possibilities?—Yes.

398. Have there been any people prospecting there to your knowledge quite recently?—About twelve months ago.

399. You say that twelve months ago people have been prospecting over that same ground?—Yes.

400. Then, they are not all like yourself, without hope, apparently?—No.

401. Let me go back to Block 1. You said, first of all, that you did not think there was any payable gold there. Is it what you would call auriferous ground?—You will get a colour.

402. All over it?—Pretty well over it.

403. Now, there is a tunnel, you have told us, which is going on at the present time?—I think so.

404. At any rate, it was going on until quite recently?—Yes.

405. And it is in about 2,000ft. ?—Yes.

406. I suppose it is rather an expensive job?—

407. Hon. E. BLAKE.] I understand you to say, Mr. Wilson, that it was one of those subsidised tunnels?—Yes.

408. Mr. Stringer.] By public subscription?—Yes; and the Government subsidy.

409. I suppose the way it is done is that the Government give something, the public give something, and the persons working at the tunnel give a portion of their labour for nothing?—No; it has been tendered for at 5s. 6d. a foot.

410. I suppose a great many people think that something payable would be found by putting in this tunnel?—Yes; some people still think that if a tunnel is put in here [indicating on map] there is a lead of gold it will cut.

411. Were you a subscriber?—I do subscribe 1s. a week.

411A. You pay 1s. a week towards this very tunnel?—Yes. Mr. McKenzie and two or three of our townsmen—

412. Do not apologise, Mr. Wilson?—I am giving you the reason. Our member and two or three men in Westport went out asking for subscriptions, and I could not refuse to give something, although I do not believe in it. I was doing some prospecting at the time on Addison's Flat on my own account, but I told them I would give them 1s. a week. That is the reason.

412A. At any rate, you contributed to this tunnel?—I did.

413. I suppose you did not regard it as a hopeless task?—I looked upon it as thrown away, unless the tunnel was run up a longer distance.

414. Have you any idea of how many subscribers there are to that tunnel?—No.

415. Do you know how much it is costing?—I think 5s. 6d. a foot, but I have no idea of how many are subscribing.

416. Your objection is not so much to the tunnel being driven, but you consider it is not being driven in the best direction to take up the lead?—It is going straight to prospecting shaft.

417. You think they should drive a little further?—Yes; a longer distance.

418. You want them to go on with the tunnel?—The only way to get gold is to go to the shaft. It is supposed by some that there is payable gold there.

419. Where is the shaft?—At the top of this reserve.

420. Hon. E. BLAKE.] Was that the original notion? Were they aiming at the shaft?—Yes.

421. And the notion was to go on if they could get the money?—Yes.

422. Mr. Stringer.] Has any other prospecting been done recently on the block that you know of?—No.

423. That is the only instance you know?—Yes.

424. You say it has been prospected before?—Yes.

425. Have you prospected it?—No. I never sank any shafts, but I have seen them sunk years ago.

426. I would like you just to look at Block 4 for a moment; you have given us a description of how you would reserve that land. I gather roughly from what you have marked out that you think that about half that block should be reserved for mining purposes, say, roughly?—Half of that would be ample.

427. Why do you draw the line in that particular way? What is your reason for excluding that triangle over to the north-west? You have told us you would draw a line from Virgin Flat to Brown's Terrace. Why do you leave that piece out at the north-west corner?—I cannot understand you.

428. You draw a line from Virgin's Flat to Brown's Terrace?—Yes.

429. That leaves a certain quantity of land to the north and west of that; why do you leave that out of the reserve?—Because I do not think there is any gold there.

430. Is the land of the same character as other portions of the block?—Some of it certainly is.