

221. You summarise it by saying that the first few years are really spent in creating the traffic which afterwards passes over the line?—Yes.

222. Do you anticipate any improvement in the traffic returns from timber over the line?—The number of mills is increasing now. The expansion is a certain thing. Also, since the land has been thrown open the sawmillers are better able to secure good titles for bush areas, and more ready to invest capital in the industry.

223. Do you know whether there is an increasing demand for timber throughout the colony?—Yes.

224. And a consequent increase of price?—Yes.

225. I understand there are very large timber areas still untouched?—Yes.

226. Where do they chiefly lie?—At places all over the West Coast. There are a number adjacent to the railway between Stillwater and Jackson's.

227. Could you conjecture the area?—No.

228. Some miles, at any rate?—Yes.

229. Could you form any estimate of the gross traffic which each mill would contribute to the railway?—No, but you could get the actual results from the railway accounts with the working mills.

230. Do you know anything of the bush areas which lie beyond Reefton?—Yes; there are some very good forests there, especially on the eastern side of the road.

231. I understand there are coal-measures there?—Yes.

232. Can you say whether, in your opinion, it is probable that private enterprise will connect those coal-measures and timber areas with the terminus of the line at Reefton?—I think it is very likely that a company would be formed to make a light line, judging from expressions I have heard at Reefton.

233. You think that private enterprise will make a light line which would cross the river?—Yes.

234. Assuming authority was got from the Government, you see no objection to connecting the terminus of the line at Reefton—connecting these coal-measures and timber areas with the line?—No.

235. Do you know whether the coal traffic is likely to be increased over the line when the Blackball do away with the aerial tramway and connect their mine with the line?—They expect to increase their output.

236. You have not gone into the question of how much they are likely to increase their output?—No; but they expect to increase it. They find an aerial tramway a restriction, and are doing what they can to get a branch line made.

237. Do you know anything of the coal-measures beyond Reefton?—Very little.

238. Have you used any of the coal?—Yes.

239. What do you think of it for household purposes?—I think it to be a favourite coal for household purposes.

240. Is it not preferred by some West Coast people for household purposes to other coals?—Yes.

241. All coal coming from beyond Reefton would be carried over the Reefton line?—Yes.

242. I suppose we may assume that a large portion of the material required for dredging would pass over the line?—Yes; material during construction, also supplies and passengers during operations.

243. Do you know anything of the extent to which dredging has been progressing during the last year or more here?—It has been progressing rapidly. I have no note of the actual number of dredges.

244. Do you know whether any marked increase is likely to result from the better application of cyanide to the West Coast ores?—I was informed that the Keep-it-Dark Mine owes its existence to the cyanide treatment—that cyanide gives a profit to the concern.

245. And its further development may mean a large increase in the mining industry?—Yes.

246. Do you know anything of the possibilities of the development of mineral oil?—It has been found near the Kotuku Station. I have not been up there, but the reports of experts were sufficiently favourable to warrant the formation of a company. If it is successful it will be a very good thing, and increase the railway traffic.

247. And, so far as that creates any traffic, it would entirely go over the railway?—Yes.

248. Do you know whether in the last year or two there has been an increase of population owing to mining and other reasons on the West Coast?—I have not looked at the statistics, but I am sure there must have been an increase.

249. Do you know whether land in Greymouth has increased very considerably and rapidly in value?—It has increased very largely.

250. And at the present time do you know that houses for renting purposes cannot be got anywhere in Greymouth?—Yes.

251. Can you give us any help with regard to the possibilities of settlement of land which would be served by these branches of the railway?—There were a number of applicants to the company under clause 37, and it is supposed that some of the applications will be renewed.

252. What area was applied for these purposes?—I think, altogether, something like 100,000 acres, but I am speaking from recollection.

253. Do you know what district it was in?—It was scattered throughout the West Coast.

254. *The Chairman.*] Were those applications made to the company?—Yes.

255. *Mr. Bell.*] For timber, or what?—For settlement purposes largely. They were not for gold-mining; they were for timber or for settlement.

256. *Dr. Findlay.*] That is, over the West Coast?—Yes.

257. You are speaking from memory only?—Yes.