

FRIDAY, 6TH SEPTEMBER, 1895. (MR. MCGOWAN, Chairman.)

GEORGE MORRIS examined.

1. *Mr. Guinness.*] What official position do you occupy in Kumara?—I am President of the Kumara Miners' Association.

2. The institution has sent in a petition asking the Government to purchase Holmes's Water-race?—Yes.

3. The reasons for the purchase are set out in the petition?—Yes; I remember the reasons were considered and inserted in the petition.

4. You think those good and sufficient reasons to justify the Government in purchasing?—Yes, I do.

5. What do you say as to the objection urged, that the level of Holmes's Water-race would not permit of water being taken into the Government race at the end of the race tunnel?—I say it is wrong. It has been proved that the water can be put into the tunnel at the lower end at a very small cost.

6. And the objection by the Mines Department is wrong?—Yes; it is only a matter of connecting with a short cutting, and the water would flow into the Government race.

7. The objection is that the water would not run up-hill?—I maintain the race is a long way above the Government race at that point.

8. Then, it says that, although it may have a capacity of twenty-four sluice-heads, only the half of that quantity is sold?—Yes; that is one argument we have in support of asking the Government to purchase. The Government are constructing two sludge-channels; there will be then a deficiency of water to work these channels. Holmes has not sufficient customers to buy the water he has; and therefore, if the Government purchase the water that Holmes has, they could utilise it to help to fill the gap when these two channels are in working order.

9. You mean to say that the difference between the twelve heads he uses, and the twenty-four heads he has, could be utilised and taken in the Government race to supply these two channels?—Yes.

10. To what number of men will the completion of these two channels give employment?—To fifty men, or more.

11. Can Mr. Holmes supply this water to those channels without selling his race to the Government?—No; in the first place, Holmes's race is facing the Teremakau, and the land these two channels are constructed to work goes backwards into the country. The Government have had races constructed further back to supply their own parties, and Holmes's parties want to connect with the channels, but there would be considerable expense incurred in taking the water round the back.

12. Suppose Holmes's race crossed the channels at this point?—Well, I have a plan of the race, and can show it better from that. [Plan referred to, and points indicated by witness.] I might mention that no matter how much water the Government had in these dams, that channel would only carry 125 heads; whereas in some cases the shifts are over-crowded, and some have to go off.

13. The question I want an answer to is this: Could not Mr. Holmes supply those parties who are working into the new channels. You say: No; because the water has to be taken back, and the Government is the only party that can distribute the water on the ground?—Yes; another point is that they have not a sufficient amount of water, and if Holmes's Race carries twenty-four heads he would have to send in ten or twelve heads to flush it at the head so that he would have only half the water for working.

14. Is that what the Government do?—Yes. One channel is entitled to twenty-five heads and the other ten.

14A. The two channels that are being constructed will require flushing-water?—Yes.

15. *Hon. Mr. Larnach.*] Is the channel that carries 125 heads not sufficient to supply all the water required?—Sometimes it is, in wet weather; but not enough to supply the whole field.

16. Supposing it was of a larger capacity, would it be enough to supply the whole field?—No, not in ordinary weather; in wet weather it is.

17. The storage capacity of the Government dams is not sufficient, even supposing this main channel was enlarged?—With ordinary West Coast weather the Government has sufficient to supply the present demand. There are thirteen parties connected with No. 5 Channel. I am not sure how many parties will be connected with No. 4.

18. At present you lose the difference of the water you could get in the wet weather?—Yes. If the channel was larger, in very wet weather the Government could get more water on the field than they do now. They lose a lot as it is.

19. *Mr. Guinness.*] The Government say the price charged is £2, and not £1 10s.?—Yes, that is true, they charge £2 per head; but we based our calculations on what was stated in the Goldfields Report, and the Government receipts showed £1 10s. per head last year. In explanation to that, I might say there is a certain amount of free water given away. We petitioned several times to get the water reduced, but Ministers told us distinctly in Kumara that they could not reduce it, but that poor claims would get assistance in the way of free water; and putting the two together—that is, parties paying £2 and the parties getting free water—paid on the average £1 10s.

20. It is said that the area Holmes's race commands fronting the terrace facing the Teremakau River, &c. (Please see report.) What is your answer to that? The same as with regard to the level?—The same as I showed on the plan. It can be turned into the back country.

21. It will command the same country that the Government race does?

22. You can connect with the main channel?—Yes.

23. *Mr. Mills.*] Is there a large area to be worked in connection with this?—Yes, 105 acres connected with the No. 5 Channel.

24. *Mr. Guinness.*] Is it correct to say that only half the water from the race is capable of being sold if it is connected with the Government race?—No; I say that if the Government pur-