

194. In reply to further interrogatories by the Chairman, the witness said, "I think it was on a Monday that we agreed to cancel the lease. *Mr. Anderson.*

195. Was it the following day that you applied to purchase?—I am not very sure. I know we ran the risk of any one else applying within the twenty-four hours. 9th August, 1872.

196. Between the time you agreed to suspend the lease and the purchase, was the fact made public?—I do not know. I did not make it public.

197. No, of course not; you would have been very foolish if you did. But did the Government make the fact known?—I do not know whether the Government did or did not.

198. If you had thought that there was any chance of competition, would you have consented to a suspension of the lease?—I suppose that we would have been obliged. We ran that risk. We thought at the time that it was a great risk.

199. If all the runholders chose to purchase their runs, what effect would it have upon the mining and agricultural interests?—I think the sooner Government sells all the land the better. At the present moment there is an enormous waste of soil. When the gold was extracted, the purchaser would take care that the soil was returned again; instead of which, at present, it is all going away into the river. The sooner it is sold the sooner it will be properly looked after. It would be much better in the hands of private individuals than in the hands of the Government.

200. Is not this land much better than any Crown land within a radius of say six miles from Roxburgh?—There is similar land, may be better, in the Mount Benger run. Indeed the Mount Benger run is very similar to the land in this block, but it is steep and mountainous. Still, it is the same sort of soil.

201. *Mr. Studholme.*] Do you know what number of water races are taken out of the Teviot at present?—I think there are about five.

202. Is there sufficient water for any additional number of races?—No, excepting during the winter season.

203. In reply to a question suggested by Mr. Brown, the witness said that the Government was talking about erecting a dam, so as to augment the present supply.

204. *Mr. O'Neill*] Are there no creeks within the block that could be made available for increasing the supply?—The witness was understood to reply in the negative.

205. *Mr. Brown.*] What frontage has this block to the river?—Seven and a half miles.

206. Are there any miners working the banks of the river, along from Roxburgh down fronting the block?—There are no miners working the river more than half a mile north from the Teviot stream; at least when I left the station there were none.

207. Do you know if there has been a demand by the people of Roxburgh for land for settlement within the last say three, four, or six years?—They are always asking for it, but they wish to get it for nothing.

208. Is there any land taken up within say seven miles of the town of Roxburgh?—All the best land is taken up. It is no uncommon thing for parties to apply to take up land, and then not take it up. Mr. Mervyn did that with his allotment. From Roxburgh upwards the land has been taken up under agricultural lease from the Government, and a good many parties are settled on the land who pay nothing. When they ask us to be allowed to settle on the land we give them leave, provided it does not interfere with the working of the run.

209. In reply to other questions, the witness said—There may be about 1,000 acres taken up in the Mount Benger district. Within seven miles of Roxburgh there may be perhaps 3,000 acres altogether, for settlement purposes.

210. How much of this 3,000 acres is fenced in?—Well, I imagine the whole of it is fenced in.

211. How many families may be settled on this 3,000 acres?—I cannot very well say. I am aware that some parties who have taken up land in it reside in the Teviot township.

212. Do you think there are one hundred settlers?—No, I do not.

213. Well, then, fifty?—I should not think there were more than twenty. I only know the men; I can't speak about their families.

214. In answer to further questions, witness said that he knew Coal Creek. Under the miner's right, five and six acres were taken up. These miners' rights only allowed them one acre, but as a rule they are very good people indeed, and deserved every encouragement. When the river was down they mined, and when it was high they cultivated their plots.

215. *The Chairman.*] Do you think such parties should be encouraged to take up five acres, in order that they may cultivate them and settle down?—These purposes have been abused. One man, claiming to be a miner, has perhaps five or six miners' rights, and he takes up five acres for each right.

216. Are you aware the law only permits him to take up one acre?—They do it, whether the law permits it or not.

217. Is it not a fact that both sides of the river are locked up against agricultural settlement?—I don't say that.

218. Will you let the land for agricultural settlement?—The land is still open for people to reside upon it. We do not take it out of the country.

219. To *Mr. Studholme.*] Very few large blocks of land have been purchased in Otago.

220. *Mr. Sheehan.*] If the runs were to be cut up into small freeholds, do you think they would be bought; I mean to be cut up by the runholders?—I do not know much about the people purchasing the land, but I think the runholders would be disposed to cut it (the land) up. I know that on the Company's stations, they are thinking about leasing the property, with a purchasing clause. Mr. Hunter, the Company's manager, has gone home to get people out to take up the land, and settle the country.

221. Do you suppose that 8,000 acres is a reliable estimate of the agricultural land in the block?—I do not know where you would find 8,000 acres. I do not think you could plough up 200 acres of first-class land in any one spot. I have never looked upon it as being agricultural land at all. I consider it good pastoral country, solely on account of its shelter and moisture.