

152. In your opinion, is it best to have auriferous lands in the hands of private people or under the Crown for mining purposes?—Certainly under the Crown.

153. Could you prospect with private owners?—No, unless it was provided for by Act of Parliament.

154. The company might sell at any time after you made that arrangement?—Yes.

155. Now, as regards the timber, what proportion do you consider the land bears to the timber in value—that is, on all those lands that have been reserved?—I gave an instance in my evidence of a case that came under my supervision in which £5 an acre was paid for the timber.

156. Can you name the block?—It was not in the selected blocks.

157. I want the relative value of the timber and the land. Point out any blocks that contain good timber?—Of course I can only speak generally.

158. Well, generally?—I should say, where there is timber, it is worth £1 an acre—that is, with facilities for transit.

159. With the railway there, and the river there, up the Grey Valley, the timber is worth £1?—Where there are good beds of timber.

160. What proportion would that be?—I could not say that.

161. If the land was assessed at £1 an acre, and the company had the right to take off the timber, notwithstanding the mining reserve, they would be really getting the value of the land?—Yes, from that portion on which the timber was good.

162. I wish to call your attention particularly to this section in the contract—that is, section 18. The company having the right to sell—to take the timber off this land—with the exception of this proviso, if they exercised this privilege, would they get the full value of the land—Yes or No?—Yes, I suppose it is so.

163. Where there is an extra good belt of timber, what would be the value of the timber on that land per acre?—I have known a block worth £5 an acre.

164. Take an average?—I think £1 is a fair average.

165. Well, now, if the statutory price of that land is £1 per acre, the company having the right to take the timber off it, there is no injury in that respect?—I think not, not under those circumstances.

166. We come next to the saw-milling industry going on in that locality?—Yes; I believe there are several mills up there.

167. They have been there for some time?—Yes; for some time. I do not know whether they are at work now. I have not been up there for the last month.

168. Your experience is confined more to the Grey Valley than south of the Hokitika River?—I have been along the north, and I have also had considerable experience down there. I was in the Hokitika Survey Office for some time.

169. As yet there is not much grass growing on the hills?—No, there is not, unfortunately.

170. Do you know what extent is under grass?—It is to be obtained from the agricultural returns.

171. Can you say within a few thousand acres?—I know of several lots on the Coast of 50 or 60 acres that grow grass very well. I know of one on the railway-line that grows excellent grass.

172. Is it on the hills?—No; it is on the flat lands.

173. I want to hear about the hill land. Your answer for the hills would apply to the country in Blocks 81 to 53?—That ground would grow grass.

174. What would it cost per acre to put it under grass?—It would be an expensive thing to do.

175. Would you undertake to settle the land on the conditions you have named?—It would not be payable unless you go the right way to work. You would have to take off the timber, and grow the grass between the stumps—not grub it.

176. Do you know of any land on the West Coast where timber has been taken off it and not put it grass—just left there?—Yes; in spots where the timber has been taken out by millowners.

177. It has lain there for years, and no one has selected it?—Yes.

178. *Mr. Wilson.*] You state that there has been no gold found in the limestone country?—Such has been my experience.

179. Are you aware that the company applied for a block of land near Greymouth?—No.

180. Is there any gold in the limestone country north of Greymouth?—Yes, there is one patch there; it is a sea-formation; it is on Point Elizabeth.

181. There may be gold in limestone country?—It is not usual, but that is an exceptional instance.

182. You laid stress upon water-races being required through these reserves. Is there any Act existing by which reserves can be made for water-races on the West Coast?—Yes, under the Mines Act. A miner can apply to construct races on Crown lands, but not through private lands unless by paying compensation.

183. The fact of it being private lands would not block the race?—You must pay compensation.

184. You referred to an ancient river-bed. Is that river-bed supposed to extend over the whole block, or to what extent?—No; it does not extend over the whole block.

185. Could you give any idea by estimate how it extends? Is it known in any way?—I do not think it is yet known; they are still working at it from one end.

186. Is there any land suitable for settlement round the east side of Lake Brunner?—Yes, that is the side on which the line goes.

187. Is that supposed to be the very best land for settlement on the West Coast?—Yes, there is some of it I consider to be the best land on the West Coast for settlement, particularly the spurs coming down from Mount Tekinga.

188. Is that land more suitable than the land on the other side?—Yes, decidedly so.

189. Is it less likely to be taken for prospective gold-mining?—Yes.