

64. Is there any extent of it not bush—without timber on it?—It is generally bush country.

65. You say there is about a third of it well bushed, suitable for timber purposes. Would you reasonably expect that to be fit for settlement, say, in ten years' time, after the timber is removed? Is it that character of country that would support a population?—Yes; some of these bush-lands which have been alienated have been cleared during the last year and laid down in grass.

66. Is it thought to be sufficiently encouraging to lead one to suppose that, say, within ten years, when the bush is cleared, this country will support a population?—From what I can learn, when the land in the other parts of New Zealand is taken up, people will take up more of the West Coast. It is being made accessible by the railway, which will enable supplies and products to be brought to market.

67. I was speaking as to how far it would be available for raising grass or crops. It would only be suitable for grass or crops; no other industry would find a home there?—There is coal-mining, and there may be other industries.

68. You do not make it quite clear what proportion of timber-land, when cleared, might reasonably be expected to support a population in time, as distinct from the rough country which will never support a population?—It is very difficult to say, because the features of the country vary greatly. If we said a quarter would be available for settlement it might be near the extent, but it would be a guess quantity.

69. With the bush-land it would be about half of the whole?—I speak of bush as covering the amount suitable for settlement as well as the gold-mining land.

70. You said a quarter of the bush-land would be fit for settlement?—Some of it would be included in that.

71. There would not be half of the area fit for settlement?—No; I do not think so.

72. I am speaking of the reserves—the yellow country?—Yes.

73. With regard to the land behind, what is its general character as to its suitability for timber purposes or settlement?—The further back you go the nearer the range you get. There is flat country from Bell Hill to Lake Brunner. I do not know how the reservations affect that.

74. What is the general impression with regard to the outside area? We were told by a previous witness that it is practically rocky country?—It is; as you go further up the watercourses you get into higher and poorer country and inferior bush.

75. Is there a large percentage of that quarter or a third likely to have value for timber purposes, or to have a prospective value for settlement?—There is, nearer the line, but the reservations block it off.

76. I am trying to get at the surface value of it?—I have not been much in that country; but I think the surface value will not be great.

77. You know the general terms of the contract, and you know the special clause giving the Government power to make reservations for *bona fide* mining purposes. Suppose yourself to be the Government for the moment, under the necessity of protecting for a reasonable time the future interests of the mining community, and it fell upon you to make these reserves; do you think, in selecting these reserves over that area, you would be able to cut the country out so as to reserve much less than is proposed to be reserved here?—It would be difficult to do it. But of course the Government, being impartial, in making such reserves to protect the mining interests present and future should look to the rights the company has under the contract, and not indiscriminately select such lands as are made accessible by the railway.

78. You have given evidence to the effect that only about a third of the yellow country, and a very small portion of the other country, is likely to be of value to the company for timber or settlement purposes?—Of course it must be understood that these proportions made are only guess proportions, merely to give some idea.

79. The area which is valuable for timber or settlement is mainly the yellow country already reserved. Could you cut the reserves down very much? We have the evidence of an expert already that there are creek-beds and auriferous ground all over it?—I quite agree with that statement. You could only cut the reserves down by making a detailed survey, not by taking a map like this.

80. If they reserved what he suggested—that is, all the creek-beds and the land around creek-beds supposed to be auriferous—would that leave any large area for settlement, because I presume what would be left would be higher ground?—The proportion of that would be what I was previously asked about. I had that in view when I said that it would be difficult to say what would be payable.

81. I did not ask you that. I meant the whole surface of the land?—You asked me what proportion might be payable for gold-bearing purposes.

82. I did not ask you that. My questions have had reference to the surface of the land. I asked you what proportion would be valuable for timber or settlement, and you said about a third or a little more. Is that right?—Yes. It does not much affect it. The idea in my mind was that we supposed one-eighth of it was actually being worked, or that we might presume that it would be required for future use.

83. Putting aside the gold-bearing area, what proportion of the country marked yellow has a surface value for timber or settlement?—The timber we spoke of as covering a third might be taken as covering the mining part too. We might increase a little.

84. Practically, the answer is that it is the same as is valuable for settlement?—Yes, practically the same.

85. Supposing we reserved all the creek-beds and the country round them, would there be much country left?—The creek-beds and shingle-beds would form a considerable portion of what would be in the digging portion.

86. I suppose if we reserved the margin round the creek-beds it would absorb a good deal of the level land?—Yes.