

196. The total value that they have to select must not exceed how much? If I said £2,250,000, would I be right?—Yes. The aggregate area is 5,913,000 acres, and the aggregate value is £3,127,999.

197. When the full requirements of the company are provided for under this contract, only a third of the area is open to select from?—That is about it.

198. Where is the principal land in this area which is suitable, and will be settled upon?—There is really very little land upon this block that any one could settle upon. The land which is most suitable is really the south portion of Westland, between Waitaha and Okarito, down below Okarito to Cook's River.

199. The great bulk of the land fit for settlement is there?—Yes.

200. Have any reserves been made to interfere with that particular land?—No.

201. Coming further north, is there a very large tract of country that can be taken up there?—No; a great deal of this land consists of mountain-tops.

202. The company have already selected most of the lands suitable for settlement at Lake Brunner?—Yes; there is more flat land there than anywhere else in that district that I know of.

203. Do the reserves interfere with them?—No. There was a small portion reserved above Kaimata, before you get to Lake Brunner.

204. Are the flat lands of the Grey Valley already principally alienated?—It is mostly freehold. There is some small portion in the valleys of streams, but very little.

205. From Reefton to Nelson reserves have not been made?—No.

206. And if the land there is fit for settlement it is there still?—Yes; there is some flat land.

207. *Mr. Wilson.*] You say you obtained evidence as to the nature and character of each of the blocks reserved?—Yes.

208. How did you obtain the evidence,—from the Commissioners of Crown Lands, the Wardens, the County Councils, Miners' Associations, and District Surveyors?—Yes.

209. Was it formal and detailed, or was it an expression of opinion?—No. Plans were sent down of the whole district, and the County Councils, Miners' Associations, Wardens, and Commissioners of Crown Lands were asked to say where the auriferous lands were.

210. Did you send down to know if they were payably auriferous? Were the plans sent down in skeleton form to show what lands they would like reserved in the district?—They were skeleton-plans for them to mark where the reserves ought to be made.

211. Were they distinctly informed that where the reserves were made the lands would be shut up from settlement?—That was clearly shown to them.

212. How do you account for the doubts of the Inangahua County Council, when they informed me that the good lands would be sold for settlement after the reserves were made?—I cannot tell that.

213. Is this a correct copy of the notice given to the various County Councils as to the method of filling up the maps: "Circular No. 9.—Mines Department, Wellington, 24th October, 1890. Reservation of auriferous areas under Midland Railway Contract.—I am directed by the Hon. Minister of Mines to forward you two maps of the County, and to request that you will be good enough to mark on them the auriferous land which in your opinion should be reserved from selection by the Midland Railway Company. As the large map does not show the topographical features of the country the small one is sent, in order that you may better be enabled to deal with the question. Please return the maps as soon as convenient.—I have, &c., H. J. H. EMOTT, Under-Secretary"?—Yes, that is one of the notices that have been sent.

214. When the maps were filled up by the various Councils do you consider that they were filled up with any true regard to the amount of land required for *bona fide* mining, or more with a desire of taking out all the land from the Midland contract they could get?—Some of the County Councils filled up the areas. I do not think the Buller Council did, but I am sure the Inangahua Council showed the areas they wanted and returned the map.

215. Is it true that one of the Councils filled in the skeleton-map to practically as much of the whole reserves as could be made by the Government?—I am not sure. One Council took a large area; and I know that, taking the total areas marked, the whole of the Councils would have taken far more.

216. So that we can infer that the County Councils went on the principle of taking as much as they possibly could in the proposed area?—No; they were asked to do certain things, to mark off where the reserves for mining were to be made.

217. You have been able to produce evidence as to the land being required for *bona fide* mining, and, in the face of the evidence that the whole coast is equally auriferous, would it not have been possible to show other areas where the land was equally valuable with the reserves made?—No; the reserves as made show where the best of the auriferous lands are.

218. Could you not have stated that other reserves could be taken than along the railway-line?—No, simply because these areas running along the railway-line run along the Grey Valley.

219. You have used the words "conducive to mining." How do you apply them?—You might take up land with no outlet to take away the tailings. You want river-beds and flats for tailings sites, also water and timber-ground, which are all things conducive to mining.

220. Then, there is no limit to the meaning of the words "conducive to mining," according to your definition?—I do not say that.

221. You said Morris's application was objected to as the land was wanted for mining purposes—for the making of sluice-boxes. Are you aware that these objections were heard before the Warden, who decided that the land was not required for mining purposes?—I could not tell whether they were or not, from my own knowledge.

222. Are you also aware that Morris also intended to supply Kumara with sluice-block boxes, and that his application was objected to because another sawmiller was doing so?—I could not tell.