

176. Hon. E. BLAKE.] There are no creeks?—No.

177. *Mr. Gully.*] The whole country is interlaced with creeks, and I suppose it is impossible to show them all on the map?—There are a few gullies, you can hardly call them creeks.

178. Now, there is a considerable portion there you think ought to be reserved—the portion that is not hatched?—Yes.

179. Just give us your reasons?—There is a good deal of gold-working in all that portion—in Napoleon Hill and Orwell Creek. There are also old gold-workings.

180. Can you say what number of men are engaged in these workings. Just look at your notes?—I could not say from memory, but there are a good many in each block.

181. The same observations you made in reference to the other blocks, as to gold being found on the banks of the creeks, would apply to this portion?—Yes; and in this portion too there is a lead of gold running through a hill called Napoleon's Hill. The lead comes out in the Orwell Creek.

182. I notice the Orwell Creek divides itself into two branches and runs through Block 70. Can you give any reason why you think the banks of the Orwell Creek within the hatched portion should not be reserved?—Down in the lower portions the creeks are like sluice-boxes, and the lower portion of the boxes would contain no payable gold. There is no payable gold down in the lower portion. The gold would be caught near the head of the box.

183. That is your experience?—Yes; when you get down towards the bottom of the creeks there is only a trace of gold.

184. Hon. E. BLAKE.] Are there freshets in the creek?—Yes; but they would not affect the gold very much. The *débris* would be washed away, leaving the gold behind, as it is heavier.

185. *Mr. Cooper.*] Has there been any difficulty in the Government ascertaining the information you have given, and in making the reservations in that form?—There has not been any difficulty at all. They would have taken all the gold-workings or likely gold-workings if they had made the reserves in that form. They have reserved thousands of acres at that place that will never be required for mining.

186. Then, in that portion you have alluded to, you say there will be a very great quantity of land never required for mining at all?—Yes.

187. There are 23,400 acres in these three blocks, and 9,000 that are reserved——

188. Hon. E. BLAKE.] And you say, Mr. Fenton, that of that number there are thousands of acres that are not required?—Yes.

189. *Mr. Cooper.*] And you have dealt with the land on the principle of reserving so much on the banks of each creek instead of on the block system?—Yes.

190. Now we come to Block 65. It is almost entirely hatched?—Yes.

191. Dealing with the lower portion of that block, there is a creek running through it called Mossy Creek. Do I understand that you think the banks of that creek should be reserved?—I do not think so. Some of the other experts think it should; so as to give the Government no chance of saying there is payable gold there they allowed it.

192. Do you think there is a chance of payable gold being found in any other portion of that hatched portion of Block 65?—No; I do not think so.

193. There is a small portion at the top of Snowy Creek. I think we shall have to deal with that before we come to deal with Block 66. You think that should be cut off?—I have allowed a few chains on the bank of the Ahaura River on each side for the purpose of gold-workings.

194. What creek is that [indicated on map]?—The Blackwater Creek.

195. It divides itself into two portions?—One is the Big River and the other is the Blackwater. The Blackwater runs through the reserves, and the other portion outside the reserve is called the Big River.

196. Hon. E. BLAKE.] That runs in about the same direction as Snowy Creek?—It runs parallel with Snowy Creek.

197. *Mr. Cooper.*] Is there any one working in Mossy Creek?—No. It was worked some years ago; but even Chinamen have deserted it, and if they could have made "tucker" they would not have done so.

198. Is there any one working in Snowy Creek?—Not when I was there.

199. Is that an abandoned creek too?—Yes. I have heard since that one man went over the head of the Snowy, higher up than these reserves, prospecting.

200. When you were there there was no one working them?—No.

201. In the River Blackwater—that portion that goes from Block 65—is any one working there?—Yes.

202. What workings did you find there?—I found a good many Chinamen and Europeans working.

203. Where were they working?—About two miles and a half up from the junction of the Blackwater and the Big River.

204. But in the creek.—Yes.

205. I see you suggest that all the reservation needed there would be a reservation of 40 chains so as to protect the mining industry?—Yes.

206. Do you think that would be sufficient for any future industry?—There is no future in that industry at all there, as it will be worked out in a few years.

207. You say there is no necessity for any greater reserve than that in the whole of Block 65?—No.

208. You think that practically, with the exception of that small portion, the whole of that Block 65 has been improperly used?—Yes.

209. What is the character of the land?—The land is different in quality. It is nearly all bush, of course; some of it is well-timbered land, hills, terraces, and flats, and of the general character of West Coast land.