

tell that; but I could tell one thing: that, though lands could be resumed since 1873, the proprietors had a better claim for compensation under the Act of 1886, and that Act was one of its amendments. There it specially provided that any one holding land in fee-simple was only entitled to compensation for the surface.

37. That does not affect any land prior to 1873?—No.

38. Then there was no confiscation?—I do not know. It was not retrospective; but I do not know whether the compensation was limited to surface rights.

39. You will talk of 1896. I am talking of 1873?—I do not know whether the Act was made retrospective.

40. Did the Act of 1873 confiscate any existing rights?—Not prior to 1873.

41. Then there is a difference between this Act and the Act of 1873?—Undoubtedly; this takes in everything from the foundation of the colony.

42. There has been some analogy drawn between the resumption of land for settlement and the resumption of land for mining. Do you know what takes place when land is resumed for settlement with regard to value?—I look upon them as two different things altogether. Land resumed for settlement is agricultural land, which a man wants to utilise on the surface and make a home for himself.

43. I was not referring to that aspect but to the question of compensation?—As far as the question of compensation is concerned, the surface of that land you take up for settlement has a value, whereas in the case of mines land has no value at all on the surface.

44. You mean that in the one case a man gets compensation to the full value of all his rights?—Yes.

45. In the other case he may not do so?—I do not know.

46. Assuming he has the right to the minerals?—He would not get full compensation assuming he had the right to the minerals.

47. *Hon. Mr. Cadman.*] I understood you to say yesterday that you approved of the resumption of land for mining purposes, but you thought it might be inopportune?—Yes, I did not say I believed in the resumption of lands for mining purposes; but what I did say was that I thought the resumption of land at the present time was inopportune.

48. Do you believe that the land should be resumed if required for mining purposes in any part of the colony?—I think so, if actually required, but I do not think they are actually required at the present time.

49. Does not this Bill make ample provision for payment of compensation before any one can start to prospect on private land?—That is limited to the surface rights, which are worth very little. It is part and parcel of the Act of 1891.

50. You think in making arrangements for compensation it should also make arrangements for the mineral rights?—That is purely a legal question. I cannot answer as to whether on land that never belonged to the Government, but belonged to the Natives who handed down their title to other people, the Government had any mineral rights.

51. I am talking of freehold on private land generally?—On lands acquired from the Crown I suppose they have.

52. You have a full knowledge of the Kauri Timber Company's land and of the Auckland gold-fields?—I know a great part of them.

53. You still think that that land is not worth much more than 1s. an acre if denuded of timber?—Not worth that a lot of it.

54. So far as surface-value is concerned?—Yes.

55. What is the main object of the company you represent? Is it to develop mining or acquire freehold land?—We prefer to acquire freehold lands in order that we may have a better title to carry on mining, if we can get them.

56. Your company prefer speculating in private lands rather than mine on Crown lands?—No; we prefer to take up private lands for mining in order to hold the fee-simple. We look on it that holding it that way would be a better title.

57. I understood you to say that this Bill would not affect the Tai Tapu Estate in the South Island?—I understood their title has been issued since 1873, and consequently it would not affect them.

58. *Mr. Fraser.*] How would that be?—They can be prospected under the present law.

59. How?—By Act.

59A. Which Act? The Act of 1892, without consent?—Yes.

60. *Hon. Mr. Cadman.*] Do you think your company would object to deal with lands which have been alienated since 1873?—They do not object, because they are taking up Crown lands at the present time.

61. You do not consider there is any risk in the title there?—They consider there is twenty times the risk in the title. That is why they are always so frightened.

62. Well, they are still taking them up?—They are taking them up, but they do not like the titles.

63. There seems to be an impression that, if this Bill passes, the Government are likely to resume all the freehold land in the country?—I do not think the Government could find money for that.

64. You have been an officer of the department for a long time: can you give any idea of the land resumed?—I do not think there is a great deal of land resumed, but it gives you power to resume. The moment a man prospects this land, people peg all round him; that is what frightens the capitalists, and they do not like to be put in that position. I do not believe for one moment that the Government is going to resume all the land, but this will frighten them from spending capital.

65. Do you think there have been 300 acres resumed by the Crown since the Act was passed?—Yes; more than that.