

*Mr. Fraser:* The land was sold with the reservation that it was not to be thrown open for mining.

*The Chairman:* The only reservation is as to cutting the timber.

113. *Hon. Mr. Cadman.*] That is why I asked Mr. Gordon if he knew the Opitinui Block, which is not thrown open to mining. Can you tell the Committee why the company reserves the right of 1,000 yards inland from high-water mark?—I could not tell you; I have no idea.

114. *Mr. Carncross.*] Have you had an interview with the Hon. Mr. Cadman (Minister of Mines) concerning this Bill, with the object of trying to modify this Bill?—Yes.

115. And you were not able to come to any agreement?—No.

116. *Mr. Allen.*] Mr. Horton is one of your advisers?—Yes.

117. The same Mr. Horton as is on the Gold Estates Company?—Yes.

118. Then, the two companies are intertwined?—It would be hard to say what companies are not intertwined.

119. All in for the plunder?—I do not know what you call plunder. It is a question of the people of the colony plundering English capitalists.

120. *Mr. Fraser.*] You know the whole of this country in Coromandel?—I know it pretty well.

121. The mining would be purely quartz-reefing?—Yes.

122. No alluvial mining?—No. It is land that requires much capital..

123. Then, this question does not interfere with the working-miner?—No working-miner without capital can work them.

124. Is it, then, the case that the operation of this Bill in that part of the colony would be in favour of a certain set of speculators who hold no right to the land as against another set of speculators who hold the freehold?—Yes.

125. Does that convey the meaning of the Bill—a certain set of speculators who hold no rights as against a certain set of speculators who hold the freehold?—I look upon it, if this Bill is passed, you are opening the door to allow of the levying of blackmail. Those who have no means of working the land levy heavy charges on men of capital who wish to work it.

126. Will this portion of the Bill, as affecting the North Island, benefit *bona fide* mining?—Oh, no, it will not benefit mining.

127. Will it benefit one set of speculators against another?—It will tend to benefit men without money.

127A. It will not benefit *bona fide* men?—No.

128. *Mr. Mills.*] You said something about assisting blackmailers; but, supposing that any one took up a piece of country, it would be Crown lands, I presume, and they would have to work it under the Mining Act?—No, it would be under the Kauri Gold Estates regulations.

129. I understand Mr. Gordon to be speaking generally?—No, only of the Kauri Gold Estates Company.

130. How could any one who took up land hold on to it against the company and the company's conditions?—If the Bill passed, of course they can.

131. I understand the Kauri Timber Company has only parted with the interest in the land on certain conditions—that the Estates Company work it under the Mining Act?—No; they sold it absolutely without any condition except timber rights.

132. Is that all the right they have retained?—The Kauri Company have no rights except those of cutting the timber on it.

133. *Mr. W. Kelly.*] What is a *bona fide* miner? How do you define the term?—I think any one with a miner's right, although he may never have seen a pick in his life.

134. How will this Bill injure the *bona fide* miner if it comes into force?—It will injure the people who put capital into mining.

135. *Hon. Mr. Cadman.*] Going back to the question of a shilling an acre value for this land, I want to ask you—the whole peninsula has country of about the same value with exceptional cases—supposing any one holding a lease of that land for the purpose of taking timber off it, when the timber was taken off would that land be no value at all to him?—I do not think the surface is any value.

136. You reckon the surface-value at nothing?—No.

137. Do you consider it worth paying rates and taxes on?—I would not take it to pay rates and taxes on it.

138. The statement was made yesterday—speaking about land at Waihi West—that the Government had arranged to purchase the Native mineral rights?—I did not say the Government had arranged to purchase the Native mineral rights. I said that I had been told by the gentleman who purchased it—Mr. Vesey Stewart—and who held that the Natives had sold their mineral rights to the Crown.

139. That is what I want to bring out. Mr. Stewart has said that the Government has purchased the mineral rights on land he had purchased?—Yes.

*Hon. Mr. Cadman:* The Government do not happen to have done so.

140. *The Chairman.*] Have you reported on the Kauri Gold Estates Company at any time?—No, I never made a report.

141. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] To the Government?—I have reported on mines to the Government.

142. Do you know of any ill effect arising from the Act of 1886?—I do not know of any.

143. And you have had a knowledge of the mining operations throughout the colony during that period?—Yes.

144. And it has had no ill effect?—I do not know of any.

145. Judging from that, what makes you think that the passing of an Act dealing with land anterior to that would have any ill effect?—I am only giving you my opinion that I think it will have.