

152. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] You say this Bill is likely to frighten capital?—Yes.
153. You have information to that effect?—That is the tenor of our cables from London.
154. Do you put them in as evidence?—No, sir, I have not them with me.
155. Are you aware of capital invested in Crown lands for mining purposes?—Yes.
156. What would be the difference if this land is reserved between it and Crown land?—The British investor has a preference for freehold title or Land Transfer, and any property with such a title offered in London goes off more easily.
157. That is not the point. I want you to give us your opinion. What is the difference between this land as resumed and Crown land?—My opinion is that if freeholds are assailable, any other property would be assailable.
158. That is getting back to it again. Would any investors invest in it the same as in Crown lands?—No doubt they might, but I think the preference is for freehold land.
159. You say miners are unobtainable. What wages do you pay them?—From 8s. to 9s. a day.
160. Do you think if you raised the wages you could get plenty?—No, I do not think they are there. If you raise wages out of all proportion, of course they would come.
161. Do you know how many shareholders of the Kauri Freehold Estates Company there are in the colony?—No, I do not know. There are no shares registered in the colony.
162. Do you know how many people hold shares?—No, I do not. It is only twenty-eight days since I took hold of this thing, and the arrears of work were so large and the ordinary work so great I have not had time to look up the history of the company.
163. *Mr. Mills.*] Do you know whether the company you represent as secretary would be prepared to pay any royalty on the gold obtained from the land if the Crown conceded their rights?—Do you mean over and above the gold-duty?
164. Yes.—No, I could not say. That matter has never come up at the board meetings.
165. *Mr. Allen.*] You hold Land Transfer title for all these lands?—Yes.
166. Prior to 1873?—Yes.
167. No reservation?—No reservation. The titles are perfectly clean.
168. When were your regulations issued?—Within the last fortnight.
169. How many licenses to prospect have you issued within that last fortnight?—It is a fortnight to-day since we issued, and when I left Auckland on Saturday I had issued thirty-four licenses.
170. And the prospector under your conditions—has he, in your opinion, a better opportunity of success, eventually, than if he were a prospector on Crown lands?—Yes; he has our help.
171. What interest has the Anglo-Continental Company in the Kauri Freehold Estates Company?—I do not know that it has any.
172. Mr. Horton is on your board?—Yes; he is chairman.
173. He is also on the Anglo-Continental?—On the advisory board, I believe.
174. You do not know what interest they have?—I have never heard that they have any interest.
175. *Mr. Duncan.*] Has this Anglo-Continental Gold-mining Company and Kauri Freehold entered into any arrangement with regard to the passage of this Gold-mining Bill?—No, not that I know of. There have been no negotiations through the board in Auckland since I have known anything of it.
176. What necessity do they seem to have in opposing the Bill, seeing there is plenty of Crown lands, and this is only certain of the goldfields that the Kauri Company is interested in?—I really could not tell you. I have no knowledge of their affairs.
177. You are directed to oppose this Bill in the interests of your company?—Not alone in the interests of this company, because, as a matter of fact, this company considers the title they have carries with it mineral rights. At the same time, no company wants to go to law, and therefore they are anxious as to the result of this legislation.
178. That almost means a threat that there will be a law-suit?—Not in that sense, but if this Bill passes there is no doubt the ground will be pegged out every time it is worth it.
179. Has your company any intention of entering into this mining speculation on its own bottom? Will they exploit a mine, or work it?—We have £60,000 in the bank for that set purpose.
180. Is that £60,000 the company's money, or other companies'?—Our company's; and the board have the ability to influence very much more to develop this and other areas spoken of.
181. How much ground have these applicants paid for?—All have not yet applied. They went to look at the ground before they pegged out. But there have been 11,000 acres applied for.
182. Has that been pegged out?—They say so.
183. Is there any kauri timber growing on this part of the property you have issued licenses for?—Very little. We would have been much more contented had it not been for objection between the Kauri Timber Company and this company. This objection, however, has been got over within the last few days, and considerably larger areas will be open, but even then reservations will have to be made on account of the standing kauri, and on account of the danger of fire.
184. *Hon. Mr. Cadman.*] You have been living on the goldfields for a good while?—Yes.
185. And are conversant with several English companies?—Yes.
186. Have you ever heard any complaints that the areas allowed by Act for special claims are not sufficient?—If it comes to complaints, I cannot say that I have, but I have heard them say they would like more ground, and did obtain it by getting two special areas close together, and if possible obtaining permission to work them jointly. This is evidence that they want larger areas. At present Waihi is something like 400 acres, and Crown about 180 acres; but I am not speaking absolutely.
187. From the impression you have, you would think the English companies would prefer having more than 100 acres for special claims?—In that case it is so, but the English directors of the Kauri Company think 60 acres is enough. I do not see exactly how they can reconcile that.