

325. Do you mean to say that there is a single mining reserve in the Grey Valley fit for agricultural purposes?—It depends upon what you mean by that.

326. Will it grow grass?—That is a question which wants—

327. Do you know that it has cost some of the Inangahua people £20 an acre, and then it has grown rushes?—The question is, Why do not people buy land from us at £1 10s. an acre and settle upon that?

328. I want to know what it will cost to bring the land into cultivation for grass purposes?—Some people say, from £10 to £15 an acre; and, judging from what we have been charged for compensation for land taken for the railway, it is worth as much as £120 to £200 an acre.

329. Are not all these lands on this side [map referred to] what may be called a range of gravelly hills?—There are, no doubt, some terraces on these hills.

330. How high are they—you know the Nelson Creek?—It is perhaps 200ft. or 300ft. high.

331. What is the elevation above the sea-level?—Not more than 400ft. or 500ft., taking these low terraces. Up at the Hochstetter it rises.

332. How high is the Hochstetter?—I do not remember.

333. Have you been over these reserves?—Yes; I have been up to No Town and went up to Bell Hill. Then I went up to Nelson Creek once and saw the workings there.

334. Do you suggest that the land around Nelson Creek is fit for cultivation?—I do not say it is land that probably an expert farmer would take up as a speculation, but the people want to get on the land and make homes for themselves. There is a lot of Nelson Creek that has been washed out.

335. You have to cross a considerable shingle-bed?—That is, of course, the *débris*.

336. Can you tell me any one of these reserves you object to, or do you object to them all in the Grey Valley?—I think we maintain that there is a great amount of land included in these reserves which are not at all likely to be required for mining.

337. What do you call "required for mining"—sluicing?—I say, for actual working and purposes connected with the working—for tailings and sluicing.

338. And residence areas?—These are the very residence areas we were supposed to get the benefit of.

339. I want to know this: When did you say these reserves affected you?—From the very time they were declared in that wholesale manner in 1890.

340. Are you aware that only 180,000 acres have been proclaimed up to 1892?—But look at the effect.

341. The Crown had a right, if it was required, to reserve 750,000 acres?—That is the point: I maintain that the Crown had no right to take up that position. They were to be taken for *bona fide* mining purposes; and in the letter of the Premier he defines the meaning of "*bona fide*."

342. How do you say it affected you, taking up these 180,000 acres?—It affected us in this way: Here is a rumour that the Government have given us land alongside our railway for the purposes of settlement, and immediately we get our railway under construction they take this land up for mining reserves, thus preventing us taking it for settlement.

343. Do you mean to suggest that the land was as valuable to you as the land on the eastern side of the range?—As far as our railway was concerned, for traffic and settlement, it was a great deal more valuable.

344. Why did not you take your areas there, then, at first?—Because clause 33 provided us with a means of getting our finance. We wanted to get the full benefit of the funded reserve.

345. I think you have admitted that all the best land on the east coast has been selected—that you had, in fact, picked out the eyes—well, I will not say that, but the best land on the eastern side of the range?—I am not certain of that. We have selected the land which was the most readily saleable, and in one place we selected a block which was anything but the best on the east coast.

346. Have you not said that you have taken the best land on the east side of the range?—Where have I said that?

347. If you have said so, would that be correct?—In a measure it might be correct. But we have not picked the eyes out.

348. Have you not taken the best land on the eastern side of the range?—We have taken the best land in so far as it was the land that we were best able to sell or deal with.

349. On page 7 of your evidence given before the Select Committee, you answer question 69, "As a matter of fact, have you not selected nearly all the best land in the area?—Perhaps on the eastern side?"—We have selected those lands which were most readily saleable.

350. Would it not be correct to say that you have picked out the best land on the eastern side?—Probably we have. In my answer I said, "Perhaps on the eastern side," for settlement purposes. On the West Coast we have practically not touched it. The timber is very valuable, and brings royalties of from £3 to £5 an acre. If you take all the mining reserves we have nothing left but hill-tops. We have selected, perhaps, the pick of the land on the eastern side. I think our big profits would come from the western side. The land on the eastern side will bring about 10s. or 12s.; on the western, £1 or £1 10s. We are making a railway on the the western side to give access to timber and minerals, consequently it injures us seriously by making these reserves.

351. I understand you to take up about these mining reserves this position: you did not expect the Government to select what—how many acres?—I expected they would take up a sufficient acreage to meet the developments of the fields.

352. I want to know the area?—Seeing that the whole area used up to date would be about 20,000 or 30,000 acres; if, then, the Government had selected 40,000 or 50,000 acres for the developments of mining—

353. Do you not say in your contract that the Government could, if they considered it right, make reserves up to 750,000 acres?—We saw, by Mr. Larnach's Proclamation in 1887, that the