

53. You cut the rivers from the east?—Yes; and that makes the line expensive.

54. That is not what I want. What was the character of the industries there?—You have certain amount of settlement—a considerable amount of settlement.

55. You are speaking of 1889, when you went more particularly over the line?—Yes; there was a considerable amount of settlement. That was a place where industry would grow rapidly when they got the line through. There were indications of permanent settlement—men were clearing the land and raising cattle and sheep; and at Totara Flat there were distinct indications of permanent settlement and agriculture—they were growing oats and potatoes.

56. There were some other industries other than agriculture?—Yes; I am coming to that. Apart from the settlement there was the goldmining. The evidence was not marked—you had to go up the gullies to see it. You might see an odd case of it from the road, but most of it was being done in the streams flowing into the Grey. You found men working in the gullies. At that time they were working at No Town. There were not many men working at their claims; they were using the water for sluicing. At Maori Gully there were supposed to be a good many working, and also at Nelson Creek; but it was practically worked out when I came. The miners were going away in numbers, and at Nelson Creek the water-race was then in a state of dilapidation, and was ultimately abandoned, because, I believe, the country was thoroughly worked out. The result was that the water-race was let at a peppercorn rent, because the Government would not spend any more money on it. You came to small valleys near Totara Flat and found some numbers of men working there. Of course that country has not got the active mining you meet with in certain centres, as when you get to Kumara.

57. That is not on the line?—Well, you have the same characteristics.

58. You found there was mining going on in some of the gullies?—Yes. As I went up the Grey Valley in a coach I did not see a great deal of these places. When you get further up towards Reefton you get on to the quartz-mines, which are of a different character altogether.

59. You are aware, of course, that there is a provision between the Queen and the company as to the reservations proposed to be made in the contract referring to gold-mining?—Yes, and for that reason I carefully examined for any indications or signs of mining, because I hoped we should have large areas mined, for the sake of the traffic it would bring to the railway; and I was surprised to see how very few indications there were unless you went right up the gullies. There was no indication on the flat lands.

60. Had you any occasion to see any Minister on the subject of gold-mining and settlement?—Yes; that was in 1889, after I got back. Of course I had an opportunity of going all over the country, and I was a good deal over it when I was with the surveyors.

61. Hon. E. BLAKE: I understand the explanation you have just been giving was as to 1889?—Yes.

*Mr. Hutchison*: I propose to put in some correspondence.

*Sir R. Stout*: Except you wish the witness to see it we have no objection to its going in.

*Mr. Hutchison*: I will not read the letters, but want them in a certain order. (To witness): I find a letter from yourself to the Minister dated 6th October, 1890. Is that the first letter you had occasion to write to the Minister on the subject of reservations?—I think it was the first I wrote, but there were others written before by others.

[The umpire here decided that the letters referred to, being the correspondence *re* mining reserves and being contained in the parliamentary blue book for 1892, should be marked as an exhibit, and reference made to it by mentioning the page. Exhibit put in and numbered 3.]

*Mr. Hutchison*: This exhibit, No. 4, of the 23rd October, 1890, will be the reply to the letter of the 6th October, 1890, same page as last. I propose to put it in, although it is not a letter addressed to Mr. Wilson, nor is it from the Minister: it is from the Chairman of the Inangahua County Council to Mr. Alan Scott, as referred to in the evidence.

*Sir R. Stout*: I have no objection.

*Mr. Hutchison*: No. 5 is the letter from the Chairman of the County Council to Mr. Alan Scott, dated 10th January, 1891 (page 16). The next is a letter dated the 6th February, 1891, from the general manager to the Chairman of the same County Council (pages 16 and 17, Exhibit No. 6). The next is a letter from the Minister for Public Works to the Manager, dated 10th July, 1891 (page 19, Exhibit No. 7). There is also a note in the print which might also go in, subject to the individual letters therein mentioned being referred to. It may serve to illustrate our case. Would it be convenient that these letters should also go in?

*Sir R. Stout*: All the letters; I do not object to them.

Hon. E. BLAKE: At present, if Sir Robert Stout agrees, it will be an acknowledgment that other letters intimating a similar intention were sent in. [Exhibit No. 8 put in.]

*Mr. Hutchison*: Exhibit No. 9 will be a letter of the 14th July, 1891, from the Minister to the manager (page 19), with an enclosure which we might call 9A. [Put in.] Next is a letter, the manager to Minister, dated 20th July, 1891 (pages 19 and 20). [Exhibit No. 10 put in.]

*Mr. Hutchison*: Do I understand that these letters have to be read?

*Sir R. Stout*: No.

*Mr. Hutchison*: The umpire will read them.

*Sir R. Stout*: I do not think it is necessary that the witness should read them aloud.

Hon. E. BLAKE: Not unless it is agreed otherwise.

[Correspondence put in—Exhibits No. 11 to No. 22, inclusive.]

*Mr. Hutchison*: Then a mass of correspondence follows which Mr. Wilson did not know of until it was put in before the Committee in 1892, and I think we had better leave that in the meantime. It does not arise in the course of Mr. Wilson's evidence at present, though it will all come in ultimately.

62. *Mr. Hutchison*.] Now, Mr. Wilson, do you remember an interview with the Minister in July, 1881?—Perhaps I ought to explain that the letter I wrote on the 6th October was on account