

Mr. J. Mackay, jun.
9th August, 1869.

When the ground is known to be of value, any person pegging out a claim there could easily, from the mere fact of having that claim, get a sufficient capital to work it, or he could sell it for a considerable sum. I consider that it would require a considerable amount of capital, as the mining would have to be carried on under tide-level through a very porous rock, which would let in water.

61. Do you think it would be expedient that special arrangements should be made for the purpose of securing the profitable development of this ground?—I have previously stated that a great portion of the ground is well known to be so rich that any man pegging out a claim there would very soon get sufficient capital to work it.

62. Supposing the ground open for work to-morrow, how would you provide against a scramble taking place?—I should make no more provision than on other gold fields. I should go down to the ground with all the police force I could muster, and decide the disputes on the ground.

63. *The Chairman.*] Do you think that the better mode of dealing with this sea beach would be to proclaim it within the limits of the gold field, and leave the mining interest to take care of itself, setting the Native question aside altogether?—I have no doubt there would be a very great rush. I cannot say whether that would be the best way or not.

64. *Mr. Dillon Bell.*] Assuming that before the proclamation of a gold field it was absolutely known that there were certain spots which would produce great fortunes to individuals, do you not consider that it would be very much better that such known places should be put up to competition, instead of allowing the effects of such a rush as you state would be likely to take place in this instance?—It would be a most unpopular proceeding, and unprecedented in the history of gold fields.

65. But looking to the public interest, and to the advisability of maintaining an equal chance, whether to the individual or to the capitalist, and putting aside all questions of unpopularity or precedent, do you consider that the course of allowing an equal chance of competition would not be the best for every one concerned, and the best for the development of the mining capacity of the place?—It would probably be less productive of disputes.

66. Do you know of any precedent where land which was absolutely known to be very rich was kept shut up for a long time, with a population swarming around, avowedly eager to take advantage of the first moment at which it was open, and then that such a spot should be opened to an indiscriminate scramble in which the man who was strongest to hold the ground which he had pegged out would have the best chance of getting his claim allowed by the Warden?—I cite the case of the Waiotahi, which was rushed by 250 men under the following circumstances: That block of land was known to contain gold, and payable gold. I turned several miners off during the month of August, 1867. By a fortunate circumstance I got it opened on the 3rd September, 1867. At that time there were a large number of miners on the field who had no good claims, and, like all forbidden land or fruit, Waiotahi was the only place where it was supposed there was any gold except at Kuranui. Although I gave no notice of it, as soon as I began to cut the survey line, men began to mark out claims, and they tumbled over one another, such was the rush to the spot. I settled all disputes that afternoon on the ground. In the case of the Golden Crown Claim I settled a dispute on the ground in a few minutes. The same would be the case on the West Coast or any other place; when a payable claim is reported, hundreds rush to peg out claims in the neighbourhood.

67. *Mr. O'Rorke.*] Would the rush on this piece of ground exceed the rush to the Waiotahi?—Of course it would, because the population is larger, and the prize greater.

68. *Mr. Dillon Bell.*] As an experienced Warden, do you consider that the public interests would be best served, or not, by preventing the consequences of such a rush in a place where the prizes were believed to be so great and certain?—As far as the block of ground itself is concerned, probably persons would get their claims better by that means; but looking at it as a political movement, whether it would be better for the carrying out of order and good government on the field afterwards, is another question. Whether the effect on discontented miners would not be bad, I do not know. There would not be likely to be so much disturbance if the land was put up to auction.

69. *Mr. O'Rorke.*] If claims of fifty feet frontage were pegged out along high water-mark, about how many do you think there would be in the block coloured red on the plan, and which is supposed to be rich?—Probably about seventy frontages of fifty feet each.

Witness was thanked and withdrew.

TUESDAY, 10TH AUGUST, 1869.

Mr. James Mackay, junior, in attendance, and further examined.

Mr. J. Mackay, jun.
10th August, 1869.

70. *The Chairman.*] What effect will such legislation as that proposed in the Bill have upon the interests of miners on the ground?—At the present time a great jealousy obtains between ordinary miners and capitalists on the gold field, and such legislation would probably tend to increase that feeling of jealousy.

71. What effect will it have on the minds of the mining community outside the Thames Gold Fields, both in the Australian Colonies and in the Colony of New Zealand?—The general result of any legislation, over and above that of holding claims under miners' rights, is a tendency to cause an exodus of the mining population from the gold field; because, in mining under miners' rights, individual interests are not carried on very well, as the expenditure of a large amount of capital is necessary. There is, again, a great deal of jealousy between the two classes, namely, the capitalist and the ordinary miner. In proof of that, I would cite the large amount of excitement on the Shortland Gold Field at the time the Superintendent issued the Leasing Regulations.

72. Will you be good enough to state whether in your opinion any, and, if so, what effect will be produced on the revenue of the Thames Gold Fields?—If the land were sold by auction, and the proceeds made gold revenue, of course it would increase it for the time being. The Government, or the owner of the tidal flat, would receive more money by the land being sold or leased by auction