

since, at which Mr. Robinson, the Warden of this District presided, it was then resolved that it was not desirable to have any land declared into a hundred, but that a block of 4,000 acres should be opened under the Gold Fields Act, and that the northern boundary should not be nearer to the present gold-workings than a mile and a half to two miles. The proposed hundred, as laid down in the plan exhibited, is the same as proposed at the meeting referred to and was then objected to.

Mr. *Michael Sylvester Duffy*, being duly sworn, states; I am a miner, and have resided here about four years. I am well acquainted with the country contained within the proposed hundred as laid down in the plan. The site is much about the same as that submitted by Mr. Robinson, the Warden, at a meeting held in Hyde about three months ago. The land then proposed to be thrown open was not to be as a hundred, but under the Gold Fields Act, and the site proposed was objected to because it included the gold-workings. The meeting did not wish any block opened nearer to the workings than within a radius of a mile. No hundred was mentioned at that time, and the people in this district, the bulk of whom are miners, object to land being opened up as a hundred now. If it was opened as a hundred there might be one or two purchasers who live in the district; the bulk of it would fall into the hands of speculators and capitalists for the purpose of monopolizing the auriferous ground. I should think over £15,000 has been expended on water-races in connection with the workings at Hyde. Such a large outlay would not have been expended, except in the belief that it was a permanent investment secured under the Gold Fields Act so long as the workings continue, and that this Act would not be overridden by any subsequent legislation, such as the "Otago Hundreds Acts, 1869-70."

Mr. *William Annett*, being duly sworn, states: I am a miner, and have resided here three years; but have been backwards and forwards in this district for the last seven years. I am well acquainted with the country within the limit of the proposed hundred, as described on the plan. I do not think the hundreds system will suit us; but it is desirable to open up more land with the privilege of commonage, and this can be best secured by cancelling the pastoral lease to the extent required, say 4,000 or 5,000 acres, and throwing open the block under the Gold Fields Act. I am cultivating two acres, and am running a few head of cattle for the benefit of my family, and pay the pastoral tenant for this privilege, of which I may be deprived at any moment. I believe that three-fourths of the population, comprising about twenty-nine families, and about forty single men, are similarly circumstanced. The greater portion of the country in the proposed hundred is auriferous; and on that account it is not desirable to throw open land, even under the Gold Fields Act, nearer to the present workings in Hyde, than a mile. If the proposed hundred was proclaimed the land would, in all probability, fall into the hands of speculators, the mining population located here would be ruined, and have to leave the country. I am satisfied that the whole of the mining population here concur with the views herein expressed.

Mr. *William Price*, being duly sworn, states: I am a farmer, and have resided in this neighbourhood seven years. I farm fifty acres, for which I applied for an agricultural lease about four years ago, and paid a deposit of £20 with my application. I hold no lease, but my deposit has not been returned. There is no land open for selection and purchase in the vicinity of the proposed hundred. It is desirable to open up more land, but not under the hundreds system, because, in my opinion, which is also the general feeling throughout this district, if a hundred is proclaimed, the land would be at once bought up by the capitalist or speculator, and the settlers would derive no benefit thereby. Indeed, as the land comprised within the limits of the proposed hundred is known to be auriferous, the bulk of the settlers, who are miners, would be ruined if it passed into other hands. It would best meet all our views, if the pastoral lease of a block of 4,000 or 5,000 acres in the vicinity of Hyde was cancelled, so as to secure the privileges of commonage under the Gold Fields Act.

*Naseby, Saturday, 24th December, 1870.*

Mr. *Henry Wirgman Robinson*, being duly sworn, states: I am Warden of Mount Ida District which includes Hyde, and am well acquainted with the country within the limits of the proposed hundred. The most important of the gold-workings in the neighbourhood of Hyde are within the boundaries of the proposed hundred, but outside the limits of the township, as shown in red on the plan. I do not think it desirable, under the circumstances, to proclaim a hundred as proposed, for the following reasons:—

1. Because so much of the land is known to be auriferous, and more, not yet proved, may hereafter be found to be so.
2. Because the alienation of the land would increase the difficulties of leading water-races through it.
3. Because all the purposes of agricultural settlement in the neighbourhood could be better met under the agricultural leases system, established under the Gold Fields Act, than by the declaration of a hundred.
4. Because, to my knowledge, the proclamation of a hundred would be opposed to the interests of the population, which is exclusively a mining one.
5. Because the wholesale alienation of the land would, to my knowledge, be contrary to the expressed wishes of the people in the locality.
6. Because the proposed area would not be suitable for an exclusively agricultural settlement, a great part of the country being rough and cut up by mining, and the communication not being convenient for general markets, but only for the limited market of Hyde.

I am satisfied, from my own knowledge, that what is really wanted by the inhabitants is a right to depasture cattle in the vicinity of the diggings, and to acquire small portions of land for cultivation and to form homesteads for themselves. This would be best provided by the cancellation of the license of the pastoral tenant over some block of reasonable extent, within which agricultural leases could be granted.

But even in the granting of agricultural leases, great caution would have to be exercised, to avoid in any way checking the development of the mines.