

absolutely false?—It is a matter of opinion. I think the timber is the greatest value of it, with the exception of some portions. It would grow grass, but large portions are not even fit to grow grass. It grows grass for a year or so and then gets covered over with rushes.

286. Then, the evidence published in London was wrong?—If the evidence was that the whole of that land would grow grass it was certainly wrong.

287. I did not say the whole of it?—I admit there are some good patches.

288. What proportion of it?—Very small.

289. Then, the evidence sent to London was extreme?—I think it was extreme.

290. You say we have close on 6,000,000 acres to select, what proportion of that reserve could the company select now and get, with any reasonable hope and reasonable time of realising it for sale?—Within the reserve there is a large quantity of flat land below Ross.

291. Is not one-third of the most valuable and suitable land we could have got—that is, the reserve of 750,000 acres—going to be made?—I say that out of the 6,000,000 acres that land ought not to have been given away for settlement.

292. If you take 750,000 acres, how about the balance?—You have got a large area then to select from.

293. Mountain-tops?—I suppose the company knew all about that.

294. You stated that the land to the north-east of Lake Brunner, where the railway is, is the most suitable land for settlement and timber?—I was asked previously about some of the land about Lake Brunner, and I say that there is a large tract of land there that is fit for settlement.

295. I think you said the best in that district?—The best in that district.

296. Then, how can you say, when the company's deviation was opposed, that we wanted to go through it?—I do not know anything about that.

297. How many years do you estimate it will require to work out the 184,000 acres now made in these reserves?—I really could not give the time. It would take a long time.

298. As an expert I should have thought you could form some idea; how many acres a year would you put it down at roughly?—An acre per man per year.

299. How many men are working on it?—I think about 1,433 on that particular block.

300. That is only 1,400 acres a year?—There is no reason why the population should not increase.

301. It is not increasing, but decreasing?—The population is not increasing so far, but the gold-mining is increasing considerably.

302. May we infer that there are ample reserves?—I am afraid there are not ample reserves.

303. *The Chairman.*] In addition to the land actually being worked by miners in that block which you estimate is about an acre per man per year, what additional acreage do you think is necessary to be reserved for every purpose connected with or incidental to mining or conducive thereto?—I should think between timber and tailings, and one thing and another, you might reserve one or two acres per man.

304. Would that other two acres per man have to be an additional reserve each year, or would it always be sufficient?—No; I think you would want an acre a year for timber, and a fresh acreage every year.

305. Can you produce to the Committee copies of the circulars or memoranda sent by the Government to the different County Councils, surveyors, and Land Commissioners, asking them to give their opinion as to what portions of the lands on the West Coast should be reserved for mining purposes?—I can supply them. (See Appendix, pages 24, 25.)

306. Can you tell the Committee whether intimation was given to the Westland, Grey, or Inangahua County Councils that in each county Government were prepared to reserve a certain number of acres?—Not that the Government were prepared to reserve, but I think information was given to the counties. I am not sure whether I told the counties distinctly, but something was said about it when the skeleton-maps were sent down—that there were only 750,000 acres which could be reserved, and that they could not reserve more than so many acres as auriferous in each county.

307. In each county? You cannot give us the figures?—No; I cannot give the figures.

308. Did the counties, in making the recommendations, recommend a greater or a less area?—Some of the counties recommended a much larger area, because the reserve was far too small.

309. Within five chains of the Christchurch road, near Jackson's, you are aware that there is a gold-mining reef?—I could not tell exactly how far that reef goes.

310. You know there is a reef?—Yes.

311. When did the company first make their application to select B1, Block 220? Was that after the coal company had been floated in London?—After the company had heard the coal company had been floated in London.

312. You said the lands for settlement were south, principally, of Ross. Looking at the map you will see there is a large area in Canterbury from which the company has the right of selection?—I know there are large areas in Canterbury, but I was only alluding to the western side of the range.

313. Bruce's station would be served by whichever line the railway was made?—You would get to it by the original line; but I believe the deviation goes actually through more good land than the other—that is, for agricultural land. On the other hand, I think there is better timber on the other line.

314. Whichever way the line goes, deviation or otherwise, would it serve both?—It would serve the land in any case.

315. Have you formed any opinion as to the advisableness of not making reserves for mining purposes until the miners have had an opportunity of objecting to any application for land if applied for for settlement purposes?—I believe it is better to make the reserves. The miners were