

proportion of that acreage lies in the Grey Valley I could not tell you at the time, but I think not more than a quarter of that whole. That, of course, is only an estimate. It is a subject which it is impossible to be accurately informed of, unless at greater cost than the company has ever been justified in going to.

39. Taking your basis under the mile for mile system, in this 160,000 acres, what would be the amount reserved for mining-purposes?—A fourth of that 20,000 acres I speak of is there, say 5,000 acres at the most—that is, a fourth of the 20,000 that has ever been used on the whole of the West Coast.

40. You have not been through that land you referred to when speaking of the terraces and low-lying land fit for settlement—the back land. You did not speak of it as having been through it as an expert?—I speak as having been through various parts, and I believe that few men have travelled over the whole of it. The country is such that possibly there may be a man or two who has travelled over it completely; but very few people can be said to have traversed it so as to know it as you know the lands in Canterbury, or near about here. It has been my business to know the nature of the land, and I have ascertained it at various places.

41. Can you state to the Committee what lands you have passed through?—Up the main rivers.

42. What rivers?—First of all, from Lake Brunner to No Town and Hatter's; also up the Ahaura and Grey Rivers.

43. Not very far from the tracks?—Except to go on the hills to be able to overlook the country up the Inangahua, and at the back of the head waters of the Maruia River.

44. After hearing Mr. Lord, a surveyor of twenty-five years standing, would you set your opinion against his in respect to this land?—Every man's opinion is worth what he or others think it. I only give mine to the extent that it may be credited. I have looked at the district for the purposes of ascertaining whether the land was capable of settlement. Mr. Lord's observations—I say it without in any way detracting from his capability—have been rather those of a surveyor, and of a detailed nature, and a great deal with reference to mining. In giving an opinion on this subject, I want it to be understood that I do not depend solely upon my own eyes, but also from what I have gathered from the company's and Government officers and other reliable sources during the six years it has been my business to ascertain the character of the lands within the area over which the company has the right of selection.

45. Your opinion has been based upon hearsay?—From hearsay a great deal.

46. The opinion of a man who has been surveying water-races, who has made surveys of tracks, who has cut lines, and knows the physical difficulties of the country would be much superior to yours from hearsay?—It may be, or it may be that one man might chiefly regard the physical difficulties in cutting a track, and not consider the land as regards the grazing and timber value as I have regarded it.

47. From looking at it, at the lower terraces from a distance, it seemed to you to be very level land?—I do not think that was any part of my answer. In my answer yesterday I generally described the features of the country. I said the lowest flat lands were, generally speaking, those sold near the Grey River; behind that rose terraces, more or less flat table-land; behind that, hills, which dipped to a wide depression before rising to the slope of the main range, about eighteen miles back from the Grey River; and I added that it was all covered with forest.

48. Surveyors and others say the gorges and gullies make it broken land. Would you say you or they are right, in saying it is level or broken country interspersed with these gullies?—I never led the Committee to believe it was all level country. I especially said it was broken up by gorges, and that the hills were all covered with timber, and that in this area there were few open patches. The idea of it being all level country never entered my head, or anyone else's, I think.

49. Were you in England, or New Zealand, at the time these reserves were made by Mr. Larnach?—In New Zealand.

50. Had the company the contract and full particulars of this 750,000 acres for mining reserves before it when they signed in August, 1888?—They had had Mr. Larnach's map before them; and they knew that map was withdrawn at the company's request, because it was admitted by the Government that such reserves were out of the question and should never have been made.

51. You say that was in 1888?—Before the contract of 1888 was signed.

52. I wish you to be very sure about this. You say positively that was so?—Your point is as to the date. It was made before then, undoubtedly. It was before them, and the withdrawal had been before them.

53. Had the company in London this contract, with subsection (c), with the 750,000 acres of reserves, before them when they signed the contract in 1888?—The contract was signed in London.

54. And they had the fullest information upon this?—It was sent Home for signature by the then Government.

55. Will you produce the letter accompanying the contract to the company?—I have already said I should be glad to produce part of the letter I wrote to the directors on this particular point of the 750,000 acres. [For letter, see page 18 of evidence.]

56. Was it the same letter that referred to the question of the amended contract you sent to London?—I did not send any letter with the contract, because it was sent direct from Wellington, when I was in Christchurch. I wrote advising on the subject. I have already said I wrote at the time on the subject of these reserves, advising the directors; and on request of Mr. Mills yesterday I promised to give an extract from the letter on the subject. [See page 18.]

57. The alarm of the capitalists in London as regards the mining reserves, those made and gazetted by Mr. Larnach, was because the area was much greater than now mentioned—the 750,000 acres?—The map is in existence in your office, and it has got the figures on it.