

472. At the head of the creek; did you go up there?—Yes; to the head of the creek; there was no one working there when I was up, but we allowed a reservation. We could not see anybody, but we were told they were workings, but they were abandoned.

473. I suppose, for the reason you stated before, that the creek-beds should be reserved, and it was allowed?—Yes.

474. Those allotments 3 and 2 are not in the reserve at all?—No; but there are allotments in the reserve. A man named Lees has cleared some of them, and applied to buy them. He is living on them, and could not get a title to them. There are no gold-workings on them.

475. That is outside the reserve?—In the reserve.

476. You mean in the reserve, but below this 9–11. Do you know that yourself?—Yes.

477. There is a man there who has cleared and cultivated that portion?—Yes.

478. Would there have been any difficulty in the Government reserving these portions as you have suggested?—There would have been no difficulty in cutting out the gold-bearing portions in this block [indicating on map].

479. Or in Blocks 86 and 87?—Or in Blocks 86 and 87.

[Mr. Cooper here produced Exhibit No. 89—Maruia, Blocks 25, 26, 27, and 28—and indicated boundaries of Block 25.]

480. What have you to say about Block 25?—I came up Block 25, all along here [indicating route on map], and I saw the land on both sides of the river.

481. To begin with, what is the nature of the land?—The land is mostly timbered country, and there are some fine alluvial flats and terraces. Some parts of it are a little hilly.

482. Are there any gold-workings along that river?—Yes.

483. Where?—On the banks of the river.

484. What, in your opinion, would be a reasonable reservation to make in reference to the mining industry along the banks of that river?—I think about 4 chains on each side would be an ample reserve.

485. Do you think there is any probability of gold being found at a greater distance than 4 chains from the banks of the river?—I do not think so. I never saw any workings over 100ft. away from the river.

486. Will you give us a little information as to the nature of the auriferous country there? Do I understand that gold in this Maruia country is found on the banks of that river?—Yes, and within 100ft. of the banks on each side.

487. Hon. E. BLAKE.] Are the banks high?—In places they are high—perhaps 20ft. or 30ft. above the river.

488. Mr. Cooper.] You have given us generally a description of the nature of the country. Can you say if there is any agricultural land along the banks of that river?—Yes, there are several fine alluvial flats all the way up the river along the banks.

489. Included in the reservation?—Yes.

490. Then, it is the quantity you think is objectionable—the quantity that is taken from each side of the river—and not the reservation of the river-bed?—It is the quantity I object to. There is no gold in the back portions over 4 chains away from the river.

491. Do you know how many men are working along the river in Block 25?—There are about twenty men working right up to about the watershed.

492. Hon. E. BLAKE.] That would be in two blocks—25 and 26?—Yes.

493. Mr. Cooper.] That would be a distance of some twenty-four miles. There are only twenty men working in that whole distance?—Yes.

494. Are there settlers along there?—Most of the men along there have farms.

495. There are men working on the river, and would like to get land for settlement?—Yes. One man whom I know has a farm.

496. Hon. E. BLAKE.] A good many of them are actually settled?—Yes.

497. Mr. Cooper.] Take Block 26. Does the same reason apply to that?—Yes; the same reason as applies to Block 25 in every way.

498. There is the same quantity of land in each block—8,328 acres in Block 25 and 8,320 acres in Block 26?—Yes.

499. You spoke about the River Warwick?—Yes.

500. Is there any gold-working in the River Warwick?—Yes; a little above where the River Warwick joins the Maruia there are two men working; at the bend of the river, from that up there is no one working. Below that there is a gorge; above that the country opens up into large flats.

501. Block 27 is a block of 6,250 acres?—Yes.

502. I see there is a freehold section in the centre—1 and 2. Do you know whose property that is?—Mr. Walker's.

503. Do you know is that reservation round that freehold block required for gold-mining purposes?—No.

504. Do I understand, then, that at the outside not more than 4 chains on the bank of the river would be required?—Four chains would be too large at that part. From the junction of the Warwick 4 chains would be too large.

505. Can you tell us what the effect of that reservation has been to Mr. Walker?

Hon. E. BLAKE: We are not trying Mr. Walker's grievances.

506. Mr. Cooper.] Then, you think the whole of that reserve, with the exception of a small portion on the bank of the river, is wrongfully made?—Yes.

507. And not required?—No payable gold has ever been found on the large flats there. There is not a miner working them, and there are no miners' rights.

508. What is the nature of the land round Walker's station?—Fair grazing land—open tussock country. Some of it is bush, but the greatest portion of it is open tussock country.

509. Block 28 is the lower block?—Yes.