

*Mr. Gully* : Are we to assume that the company are lead in evidence as to blocks the reservation of which affect the company, or merely upon the ground that they are unnecessary, whether they affect the company or not?

Hon. E. BLAKE : I suppose they all may be assumed theoretically to affect the company, inasmuch as the company have the right of selection of every single acre in the area, and they are prevented more or less—

*Mr. Gully* : I quite admit that theoretically that is so. I would suggest, however, that, unless there is really some substantial ground for supposing the land to affect the company, that it need not be referred to. I do not suppose it will be suggested that the reservation of the upper part of Maruia would substantially affect the company at all. I am only making the suggestion in the interests of saving time. I admit that, theoretically, they have the right to go into the whole thing.

163. *Mr. Jones*.] We will take Doughboy?—Through this block runs a small creek called Doughboy; it has been completely worked out. Two men were there at the time. They have a claim protected. They cannot make it pay. There was another man who was working there at this claim, but that claim was worked out within a fortnight after we saw him. It is all rich agricultural land, and there is a considerable amount of clearing going on at the mouth of the Doughboy.

164. Hon. E. BLAKE.] Still, there was a man actually working there, and was going to continue for a little time; but you think that was the last of it?—Everybody else has left the place. If any reservation at all were made, a reservation of a chain on each side of the creek would be ample.

165. *Mr. Jones*.] What is the character of the land in Doughboy?—A very rich loamy soil. In fact, we went right up to the ankles in the place. Where drained it is excellent land. It is heavily-timbered land, and extensive clearing is going on in the upper portion.

166. That covers all the Westland reserves. We now come to Exhibit No. 90, Westland group, and to Block 2B. What do you say about that?—None of Block 2B is required for mining purposes. I traversed that block in every direction; and the only mining operations I found going on were by two Chinamen who were fossicking. I saw one of them afterwards. They abandoned the ground. They worked for five weeks, and did not get a pennyweight of gold between them. There is nobody on the ground at the present time. It is very rich timber-land. I think, on the ground, we estimated it to give 20,000ft. to the acre on the average.

167. This is the old Waimea Diggings. You go to 1, 2, 3, and 4 terrace until you get to Chesterfield. Is that lower ground or higher ground than Block 2?—It is much higher ground.

168. Is this ground in Block 2 required for any purpose incidental to mining in Block 2A?—Not at all.

169. Is it required for the deposit of tailings from that block?—No.

170. There is a track which runs along this block?—Yes; the Chesterfield Track.

171. In any place did you see tailings falling through the higher ground into Block 2B?—No.

172. You say it is not required?—It is not.

173. Is it required for timber purposes—for miners working either in Block 2 or Block 2A?—No; because Block 2A is sufficiently timbered for mining purposes.

174. In Block 2A, following up the Chesterfield Track, on the southern side of that track, what do you say about the land there?—There is no mining of any sort going on there. It is timber country. There is not a single man working upon it. There is not a single right existing upon it.

175. There is a gully called Maori Gully?—Yes.

176. You traversed the gully?—Yes; I traversed the land in all directions.

177. And you say it is not required for mining purposes?—It is not.

178. I think Block 6 was the next we took. What about that?—Well, of course there is a small proportion of detached land there, which forms portion of Block 6. On this portion of Block 6 there is one claim of 50 acres extent, and four men are working there. I am sorry to say the 50-acre claim is not paying. Two Chinamen are prospecting there now. But a reservation should be made of 58 acres altogether for the rights existing. I do not think, myself, that it is required, but I am in favour of making a reserve of 58 acres in that block.

179. Is there not a race connected with the 50-acre block?—I think the race runs through the 50-acre block—I think, the whole way. I know for a fact that these rights exist in the block. I do not think they are required, but they exist. The existing rights should be protected.

180. We will go to the lower or western portion of the block?—The whole of that portion of the block is not required for mining purposes. There are no mining operations at all upon it. It is flat terrace land.

181. Then, as to Block 1?—All the gold-workings are confined to the western portions of the block there—Larrikin's, Dilman's, Kumara. The other portion of the block is not required for mining purposes.

182. Hon. E. BLAKE.] What do you say should be reserved?—1,000 acres at the outside would cover all the workings of Kumara on the western portion of the block. Of course, it fronts the Teremakau.

183. How much would that leave free?—4,250 acres. In that 4,250 acres the reservation should be allowed for the existing water-race—Holmes's Water-race—which runs through the block.

184. *Mr. Jones*.] Dealing with Block 1 and Block 6, it would be necessary for the Kumara people to have timber to work their ground, would it not?—Yes.

185. Have you, in computing what should be reserved and what should not, made any allowance for the requirements of timber for the future?—We have made ample allowance.