

431. Why should not gold be found there as well as any other part which is of the same character?—Some of these are large flats, where the level of the leads are denuded and washed away.

432. I want to know on what principle you exclude that portion to the north-west?—Because I do not think it contains payable gold.

433. What reason have you for that belief?—It does not follow that because the ground is of the same nature that there would be payable gold there.

434. But I want your reason?—The reason is that the miners have been looking for gold there, because if there was any there it would be easily got.

435. Then, we may take it generally from you that all land which has been, in your opinion, prospected and payable gold not found should be excluded from the mining reservations?—Yes, all land that has been well prospected.

436. In fact, to put it concisely, you hold that where gold has not been found it will not be found?—If it has been prospected. I look upon it that the surface is better than the gold where ground has been well prospected.

437. Do you say it is good soil on 2, 3, and 4?—Perhaps it is not a good soil.

438. Is it not absolutely barren?—It is no good for gold, that which I have excluded.

439. I am speaking of the soil on 2, 3, and 4?—There are some blocks of good soil—limestone.

440. Pieces that have not been taken up?—There are some blocks, and I dare say it would have been taken up if the company—

441. First of all, generally, is not the character of that land on 2, 3, and 4, apart from its fitness for gold-mining purposes, exceedingly barren swampy land?—Yes; it is not first-class land.

442. I am asking you whether it is first-class land; but is it not swampy and barren, as a rule?—Yes.

443. And is not the greater portion of it utterly worthless for either pastoral or agricultural purposes?—It is not exactly worthless, but it is not worth much.

444. How much is it worth an acre, apart from the gold—as a whole, not special pieces—for agricultural and pastoral purposes?—That would be very hard to say.

445. Would you buy it for 10s. an acre?—Some of it is worth 10s. an acre.

446. And some is worth, what?—Some of it is worth less.

447. Hon. E. BLAKE.] Is any of it worthless?—No, none of it is worthless.

448. *Mr. Stringer.*] How much would it average all round—would 7s. 6d. an acre be a fair average price to take the lot?—I dare say it would be a fair average price.

449. Seven shillings and sixpence an acre all round?—Yes.

450. You would not like to buy it, even at that price, would you?—I would not care to buy it.

451. You speak of limestone as if the fact of finding the country to be limestone was quite enough to demonstrate that the land is not auriferous?—I think so.

452. Is it not a fact that gold is associated with limestone?—I believe it is; but I have never seen it in my experience.

453. I understand you to act on the theory that, when you come to limestone country, there is nothing in it, and that you ought to pass it?—Yes.

454. Do you not know as a fact that down south they have limestone in which they are working?—No.

455. And if it be so, you have been working on a wrong theory all your life?—Well, if they find it down there I shall be glad. It has got to be found first.

WILLIAM SPRY HARRIS sworn and examined.

456. *Mr. Jones.*] What are you?—A miner.

457. A gold-miner?—Yes.

458. How long have you been gold-mining?—In New Zealand?

459. Yes, in New Zealand?—Thirty years.

460. Were you gold-mining before?—Yes.

461. Where?—In Victoria.

462. How long in Victoria?—Ten years.

463. So you have been practically mining forty years?—Yes.

464. Have you been in the Westland District at all?—I have been living there since 1870.

465. And you know Anderson's district, on the Westport Block?—Yes.

466. Do you know this block [No. 1] above the Buller?—No; I cannot cross the Buller.

467. You know No. 2?—Yes; I am perfectly acquainted with that block.

468. Now, can you tell me if there is any portion of that block which you say is not required for gold-mining purposes or purposes incidental thereto?—Only a small portion; I do not think there is any gold in it.

469. Show me on the map?—That is Wilson's lead, and I draw a line from half a mile. There is no gold found on the coast side of Wilson's lead. I draw a line across the block. I do not think it is required for half a mile or a mile—no gold. There has been none found; and Wilson's lead was passed before I came to Addison's. The only gold lead is where there is a company on the road, and the miners brought the water in. That is the old lead [indicating]. It is the old lead that is paying.

470. And to the west you say it is not required for mining purposes?—No gold has been found.

471. Have you been there at all?—Yes.

472. You speak of your own knowledge?—Yes.

473. With reference to No. 2 you have given your answer. I will go to No. 3. You understand that map? That is Piper's, and there is the road. There is Schwerer's house on the road. Go across here. Look at that plan, and tell me if any portion of that is required for gold-mining purposes?—Yes, to Piper's and this comes in together,