

690. Do you know of any other clearings?—Yes; there is Mackley's freehold clearing.

691. Are there any others?—I do not know of any other.

692. You know, of course, that all this land in these different blocks was for many years open for selection from the Government before these mining reserves were made, and before this Midland Railway was started?—Yes.

693. Can you tell us why the people did not take that land up?—They might not have been in a position.

694. That is your idea?—Yes.

695. You say they were not in a position to take up this land?—No; my father was not in a position to take up any more of that land at Spring Creek.

696. Produce fetched a very high price in that valley at one time, did it not?—I believe so.

697. And yet people did not clear the land?—No.

698. You think it was because they had not the means to do so?—I think that is the reason.

699. It was because it was not a payable thing to do?—Some seem to make it pay. I got 13s. 6d. for lambs in the Greymouth yards. That is a very fair price.

700. What is your experience of the effect of the railway on the price of produce in the Grey Valley?—I do not think it made much of a difference.

701. Has it improved the price?—Yes. You can get your stuff delivered cheaper.

702. But has it improved the price of produce?—Generally, I could not say; but I do not think it has done anything against the settlers.

703. Is it not a fact that it has caused produce to be cheaper and the price lowered generally?—We do not seem to get our stuff any cheaper. The freight is a little cheaper.

FRANCIS ROGERS sworn and examined.

704. *Mr. Jones.*] What are you—a miner, I think?—Yes.

705. You have been all your life mining since you were able to work?—Yes.

706. And a great deal of your life has been spent in the Boatman's district?—All the time.

707. That is within Block 53?—Yes. [Features of the map explained to witness.]

708. Will you look at Block 53 and tell me if you think it is necessary to reserve the whole of that block for gold-mining purposes or purposes incidental or conducive thereto?—I do not.

709. We will commence from the left-hand branch of the Inangahua River. What portion of that should be reserved and what not, going as far as Boatman's first?—I do not think any part should be reserved except the small tributaries, which have been pretty well worked out already.

710. Take Frying-pan Creek, and the next one to it—Due North?—I do not think there is anything there fit to reserve.

711. Have you ever worked there?—I have prospected it.

712. And what about Due North?—I spent a good time there prospecting. I spent between six and seven months there. One hundred and twenty days' work was done, but it was broken time.

713. Did you get anything?—We could not pay the liabilities in regard to it. There was expense in getting the water—in pumping. We brought a tail-race into it for 10 chains.

714. You prospected the ground, and thought it would pay?—Yes.

715. What do you think of the ground outside the hills?—I do not think they are auriferous. They are auriferous to a certain extent, but not to pay.

716. Have you tried them?—Yes; I have sunk holes in them.

717. And they are not payable?—No.

718. Now, we will start at Boatman's, taking in the whole of the creek: is there any necessity for any reserves to be made up Boatman's Creek? Is there more land than is required, and, if so, what portion?—I think the land reserved there already is ample for prospecting.

[Map further referred to.]

719. I ask if this land on the south side—Redman's Creek and Flower's Creek—if any of that land is not required for gold-mining purposes?—I do not think so. I have not prospected all that land.

720. Have you prospected any of it?—Flower's Creek I have.

721. But outside Flower's Creek is this land required for *bona fide* mining?—No; nothing outside the creek.

722. Coming up to Caplestone again, going to the east of Caplestone, and also north, what do you say about that land? It goes about a mile and a half to the east of Caplestone; what part do you think is rightly reserved?—I think Welcome and Fiery Creeks are rightly reserved.

723. And what else, if any?—It should go through Specimen Hill. I think that should be rightly reserved—I think the whole of it right through.

724. What portion of that block is not required for mining purposes?—From Raglan's Hill down the main road you do not require.

725. Have you prospected at all in that block?—Yes.

726. Where?—On the north side of Larry's Creek I have prospected.

727. During the time you have been residing there have you ever known any payable gold to be obtained in alluvial ground?—No.

728. Block 51—do you know anything about that?—Yes; I prospected for a few months there on the north side.

729. On the north side of Larry's Creek you have prospected?—Yes.

730. Did you find any gold?—No; not payable.

731. *Dr. Findlay.*] You have been mining all your life, you say?—Yes.

732. I suppose you know as much about ground that promises to yield anything as anybody?—Yes; I think so.

733. *Dr. Findlay.*] When you came to prospect in Block 53 the prospects seemed very good, I suppose?—Well, they seemed payable.