

6. But generally the river-flats should be reserved for mining purposes, I think?—Not in the hatched portions.

7. Tell me where there are any river-flats in the hatched portions that you think should not be reserved for mining purposes?—If you would show me the plan I would point them out.

8. You take, for instance, the Maruia?—In the Maruia it is all flat country, and I consider the whole of the lands in the Maruia are not required for the purpose.

9. Have you formed any idea of the extent of this Maruia space?—I suppose there are some thousands of acres of flats.

10. Well, any others?—The Ahaura Flat. There are hundreds of sheep and cattle grazing there; it is nice open country. The flats up along the Big River and Slaty River.

11. Yes?—Barrytown Flat, which contains about 7,000 acres, I think.

12. You are keeping to land in that hatched portion?—Yes, in the hatched portion.

12A. Hon. E. BLAKE.] You are cross-examined as to the flat lands being opened by you being in the hatched portion?—Yes; do you want me to go further than that?

13. *Mr. Stringer.*] I want you to tell me the good lands you include which are in the hatched portion?—There is very fair land along the Kangaroo River, a fair block there. In Block 74, near Larkin's water-race, there is a flat portion there of very fair land. There is a flat portion again near the Ahaura South Railway-station, near where Hand's sawmill is—very fair land.

14. That is the small block of 370 acres, you mean?—Yes; and north of that again, toward the Ahaura River.

15. Hon. E. BLAKE: You mentioned the Ahaura Flat generally, you know?—They are both sides of the river. That land, again, up near Mackley's, on Block 69; and Snowy Creek—in the creek there are some very fair flats. That small block of 380 acres on Block 54.

16. What is it near—what river or creek?—The left-hand branch of the Inangahua—fair flat land. North of Larkin's Creek, Block 54; very fair land there.

17. *Mr. Stringer.*] What acreage?—The block is 2,040 acres; that is fair land.

18. Hon. E. BLAKE.] Is it the flat portion you refer to?—No; it is not all flat, but there is a good deal of fair land on it. Some of the land on Blocks 2, 3, and 4, in Westland, down near Westport; some of that is fair land.

18A. *Mr. Stringer.*] You have been through, now, all the maps—the small maps?

Hon. E. BLAKE: Yes.

19. *Mr. Stringer.*] I am taking the land you mentioned—2, 3, and 4. Do you really say that some of that is good land?—Yes; some portions of it, along the limestone terrace.

20. What extent of land, and nature, there?—I could not estimate the extent.

21. What would be the average value of the whole of the hatched portions in 2, 3, and 4? We have had a farmer, farming in the neighbourhood, and he has told us that all the portions would be worth 7s. 6d. an acre. Is that a fair price?—I should think it ought to be worth more than that.

22. What do you say?—Some parts would be very little, and some parts more.

23. I am asking you to take the average?—I would put it at a low average.

24. Lower than 7s. 6d.?—No, I do not mean that; perhaps 10s.

25. You think it would average 10s. 6d. per acre—that is, the hatched portions?—Yes.

26. Have you formed any idea of the proportion of fair, good land on the whole of these hatched pieces?—No, I could not.

27. I suppose I would be right in saying it would be a small proportion of the whole?—Yes.

28. The major part of it, I dare say it is timber and stony land that would not be useful for settlement?—I think all of it would grow grass if the hills were cleared. Perhaps in time it will be, and sheep and things on it.

29. You think the whole of it?—I think, in time.

30. In the course of what time?—I think it will be cleared.

Hon. E. BLAKE: That is not evidence.

31. *Mr. Stringer.*] You are on the coast for a long time?—Yes.

32. And I suppose you were on the Coast when all this land was opened for settlement?—I could not say whether it was opened for settlement or not.

33. You do not know that the Crown lands, taking the Grey Valley, for instance, were opened for settlement in the same way as other Crown lands?—I do not know much about the land-laws.

34. Hon. E. BLAKE.] Then, for all you know, it was never opened for settlement; it was not reserved, that spot, so far as you know?—No.

35. *Mr. Stringer.*] Do I understand that if it was open for settlement for many years that you are surprised that people did not take it up?—Some portions of it.

36. What portions?—Portions where there is good land.

37. You say, more or less, you are surprised it was not taken up?—The lands you have mentioned do you mean? Yes.

38. What would you suppose the land you have mentioned as being good land would be worth an acre to buy in its native state?—Some of it 10s., some £1, some £2, some £3, and some £4.

39. I suppose the £4 block that you speak of would be a very exceptional block?—Yes; it would be a very exceptional block.

40. Where was that?—Some of it at Arnold's Flat.

41. What area?—Oh, perhaps a thousand acres or so there.

42. In which of the hatched portions do you say that is?—In 81.

43. If you were told, Mr. Fenton, that the Arnold Flat was open for years for selection at £1 an acre the upset price, would you be somewhat astonished that it never had been taken up?—I should like to buy it for £1 an acre.

44. You do not know, I suppose, that it is tried for years?—No; I do not know.

Hon. E. BLAKE: You did not prospect that line?

45. Have you any knowledge of the cost of clearing this bush land?—Yes.