

678. Is that birch land?—Yes.
679. Very much of the same character as the land around yours?—Yes.
- 679A. How far does the timber country run from the mouth of the river going up in the direction of Walker's Station?—As far as thirty miles.
680. Are there any flats or anything of the sort on the south bank of the river in that thirty miles fit for settlement?—Oh, there are flat bits all over, but not very wide.
681. They run along the edge of the river, do they not?—Yes, they do.
682. Have any of the miners there little homesteads?—Yes.
683. And a little garden?—Yes.
684. How far are their homesteads away from the river-edge generally?—About 3 chains from the river.
685. And do their gardens grow anything like good fruit and grass?—Yes.
686. And vegetables?—Oh, yes.
687. Then, from your knowledge of that country, do you say it is all agricultural and pastoral country as far up as Walker's Station?—Yes.
688. With reference to gold again, have you done any prospecting outside the actual piece of ground you worked?—Yes; on one side of the river—on the side I live on.
689. Did you go back into the flats and prospect?—I did.
690. And did you try the gullies?—I tried the flats.
691. Did you get any gold?—No.
692. *Dr. Findlay.*] How long do you say you have been on the West Coast?—Eighteen years.
693. And you have been mining pretty well all that time?—Yes, pretty well.
694. You have seen a good few rushes in that time?—Yes.
695. How many rushes have you seen in that time do you think?—Three rushes.
696. Where were they?—Up the river I referred to.
697. Up the Maruia River?—Yes.
698. Three or four, do you say, up the Maruia River?—Three.
699. Since you were there?—Yes.
700. How many men would engage in one of these rushes, that is, a big number?—One was about two hundred. On the others hardly any; the biggest was two hundred.
701. What happened in this Maruia River happens all over the West Coast—there are rushes from time to time to better places where gold is found?—Yes; but these last years there have been no rushes.
702. You have been sticking to your place, but you know from your practical knowledge that rushes leave one place and gather round another?—Yes.
703. That is constantly taking place on the big goldfields?—Yes.
704. These rushes that take place up the river, what leads to them, do you know where they started?—They got a bit of a prospect and thought it would pay, and, of course, the people were talking about it, and they rushed the places. They found that it was no good.
705. Before these rushes took place the whole of that country had been prospected?—Yes.
706. And rushes very often took place to ground that has been previously prospected. Somebody is smarter than another?—Yes.
707. Because a piece of ground has been prospected, that is no reason why there might not be a rush there?—I do not know.
708. You have given an illustration of it. I put it to you that, because a man has not a prospect, gold will not be found there, does it follow?—It is pretty well prospected.
709. I will put this question to you as a practical miner who can answer: Because gold has been found by one, it does not follow that it will not be found by somebody else?—That might be; I cannot say.
710. The population of any mining district is always changing—some come and some may go?—Oh, yes.
- 710A. Were you on the West Coast when the Kumara started?—No; I was in Nelson. I did not go to Kumara at all. I went up to where I am now about that time.
711. But your knowledge of the West Coast must begin about eighteen years ago?—Yes.
712. You did not prospect further back than 2 chains from the river?—That is all.
713. You did not go into any of the valleys or gullies back from the river?—Yes; but I did no good.
714. To all of them?—I prospected about where I am.
715. Not further up the river than where you are?—Not in every place.
716. With regard to this land where you grow grapes, and so on, I suppose you chose the best piece of land you could find along the river?—Well, it is, of course, good land; it is not the pick; there is plenty more along the river of good quality.
717. Has it been settled?—No; there is no settlement there.
718. You have taken up more and are clearing it, and have no title to it?—The title I have got is only for twelve months. It is an occupation license for twelve months.
719. What are you clearing it for; is it to buy it, or what?—I clear it to buy or lease it.
720. These flats you refer to, how wide are they along the river-bed?—Some places very wide, and some places very narrow.
721. What is the greatest width?—The widest place is about 30 chains.
722. *Mr. Jones.*] Do you recollect Mr. Buller, the Government surveyor, being up in that district?—Yes.
723. Do you remember that the whole of that valley was laid off in sections of 50 and 100 acres each, for contemplated sale?—Yes; I remember that.
724. How long is that ago?—About six years.