

725. And the Government proposed selling the whole of that valley in sections; did they not—Yes.

726. I think you misunderstood Dr. Findlay; you said you only prospected the land 2 chains back; you went forward towards the hills. You did not confine yourself to that?—No.

727. How long did those 200 men stay on that place?—They stayed about six months.

728. And that is how long ago?—About six years, I think.

729. And then the population dwindled down; what is it at the present time?—It dwindled down to nothing.

730. You know nothing of any rushes except on the Maruia?—No.

[Hokitika Blocks.]

GUSTAVE HAUSSMAN sworn, examined by Mr. Jones.

731. What are you?—I am a valuer of mining property.

732. For what property?—For the County Council of Westland; I am now acting as such.

733. Have you any other appointment of a similar kind to that?—I have filled appointments under the Government, as valuer of lands on the West Coast under the Property-Tax Department.

734. For the County of Westland?—No; for the Government.

735. Yes, but for the land in Westland?—Yes.

736. Are you a practical miner?—No.

737. When you speak of this reservation, you can only speak of what you actually saw in travelling the country, not from a practical knowledge of mining?—I am not actually a miner.

738. Commence first of all at Block 2B [Exhibit 90], that is where your Westland country is?—Yes.

739. Did you go over that at all?—I did, repeatedly.

740. Did you find any miners on the block?—Not on the block itself, it is outside that patch they are working, what we call beach-combing. Griffen and party are working that patch outside the mining block.

741. Do you know the terraces there, numbers 3, 4, 5, and 6 terraces?—I do.

742. The Lamplough and Chesterfield diggings?—Yes.

743. The Chesterfield track, have you been along it?—Yes.

744. Are there any diggings on the east side of the Chesterfield track?—There are.

745. Are they at a higher altitude than the track?—Yes.

746. Is that land, 2B, required for any purpose incidental or conducive to the mining which is now going on on Block 2A on the higher land, and on Block 2?—Not in any shape or form.

747. Did you take any notice where the tailings and *débris* from those workings on 2A were being deposited?—All on the creek; none of them going on Block 2B.

748. From what you saw, would you say that block is required for mining, or any purpose incidental or conducive thereto?—I should not think it. There is no mining carried on there, nor any *débris* deposited there.

749. How long have you been on the West Coast?—Over fourteen years.

750. Do you remember Block 2, in the Waimea District, and all through there: there used to be a much larger population there?—Yes; a great deal larger. Where there is one person now there used to be fifty before.

751. When you find a block like that, contiguous to well-known workings and a densely-populated district, and when that block is not worked, what is the inference drawn from those facts?—That it is not wanted for mining purposes.

752. Did you find any evidences in the bush of prospecting: any shafts sunk?—It has been prospected.

753. From all the evidences you discovered, it is not wanted?—In the terraces adjoining, innumerable shafts have been sunk and tunnels driven. I do not think there has been a speck of gold got there.

754. Coming to Block 2A, running along the Chesterfield track?—There is one man working there. Another man was at work, but he has given it up.

755. Coming through that Block 2A, how much of it is required for mining purposes?—

*Mr. Stringer*: I submit whether there can be any value as to this gentleman's theoretical knowledge, when he is not a mining man, but a land-valuer.

*Witness*: I am a mining-valuer too.

Hon. E. BLAKE (to Mr. Jones): It is evidence of an inferior grade to that which you have already given.

*Mr. Jones*: I admit that. But this witness can certainly give evidence as to what he saw on the ground.

*Mr. Stringer*: He is now giving theoretical evidence as to the probability of certain land being auriferous.

Hon. E. BLAKE: If he limits himself to telling us what he saw—that certain land was thoroughly prospected, and has been abandoned—we can all draw an inference. It does not require an expert to draw it. I am quite willing to draw it unless I hear something to the contrary myself.

756. *Mr. Jones*.] We will still go on with 2A. Did you traverse that country?—I did.

757. Carefully?—Yes.

758. What did you see as evidence of mining?—A few scattered fossickers—about six or seven altogether.

759. Where were they fossicking?—On that creek [indicating on map].