

THOMAS FREDERICK FENTON sworn and examined.

Mr. Gully : As there may be a conflict of testimony, I propose to ask that other witnesses shall be relieved from attendance.

Mr. Hutchison : There is Mr. Blow as well.

Mr. Gully : That is, I submit, unreasonable. It would be extremely inconvenient for my learned friends for Mr. Blow to be ordered out. I only suggest that there will be a conflict of testimony in regard to the mining evidence, and that mining witnesses only should be ordered out of Court.

Hon. E. BLAKE : It is very inconvenient that persons in a position to give general knowledge with reference to this matter, although not able to testify to it themselves, should be desired to leave. I must leave it to the discretion of counsel.

Mr. Cooper : I do not think we object to Mr. Blow remaining in. You only object to the mining witnesses, Mr. Gully?—Yes. [Mining witnesses ordered out of Court.]

11. I believe you are a mining and commission agent, Mr. Fenton, residing at Reefton?—Yes.

12. I believe you are a practical miner besides?—Yes.

13. I believe you had for a considerable time the direction of the Government School of Mines on the West Coast?—Yes.

14. How long were you in charge of the Government School of Mines on the West Coast?—For several years.

15. Between what dates?—Between 1885 and 1889, I think.

16. I think you have also been manager of mines and batteries on the northern goldfields?—Yes.

17. How long does your total experience extend over?—For twenty-five years on the goldfields—for fifteen years on the Thames and ten years on the West Coast.

18. What properties are you manager of at the present time?—I am manager of several of the principal mines at Reefton.

19. Might I put it to you also that you have been advisory agent to Mr. Ziman?—Yes; I advised him what claims to buy.

20. So that you consider yourself competent to give an opinion upon the mining districts around Reefton and the West Coast?—I think I have a very good knowledge of mining and the value of mines.

21. Have you a knowledge of the country also?—Yes.

22. What were your duties as director of the Government School of Mines?—When it started first the Government engaged me to teach ordinary and general mining, surveying, and all the branches connected with the School of Mines.

23. Geology?—A little geology, practical mining and surveying, and everything connected with it. I had to teach the miners how to pass for mine-managers' certificates, and also general mining.

24. You were assistant to Professor Black?—Yes.

25. I believe you have gone over—I am dealing now with the set of blocks numbered on this plan—the Grey Valley group?—Yes.

26. Hon. E. BLAKE.] You mean that you have gone over them on the ground?—Yes.

27. *Mr. Cooper*.] When did you make a critical examination of the ground?—In June and December of this year.

28. Had you a general knowledge of the locality before?—Yes.

29. But had not made any particular examination of the various blocks before?—No, not before.

30. Now, beginning at the bottom of this map, at Block 81, that block, I think, commences close to the Stillwater Junction?—Yes; just close to the railway.

31. Along where?—Between the Arnold River and No Town Creek.

32. Is it the discharge of Lake Brunner—the Arnold River?—Yes.

33. Block 81 is within the red lines, I think; it has the Arnold River as its southern boundary and No Town Creek as the northern boundary?

Hon. E. BLAKE : I think the boundaries of the blocks have been sufficiently proved by Mr. Young's evidence.

34. *Mr. Cooper*.] Taking the block from the boundary, I want you to describe the general features of that block, Mr. Fenton, from the Arnold River northwards?—All the portion near the Arnold River is all flat timbered country. I went through it carefully in different directions, and I found no mining of any description there going on. I went through it in different directions right up to the boundary of it at Portuguese Creek.

35. There is a portion there from the Arnold River to No Town Creek which is hatched. Did you find any mining on that portion, or the western portion?—No.

36. You have told us that it is bush country. What is the nature of the country; from your experience, do you think there are any payably auriferous deposits on that portion?—No, I do not.

37. That portion contains approximately?—Three thousand five hundred acres.

38. To your knowledge and in your experience has there ever been payable gold discovered on that portion?—To my knowledge there has never been any gold discovered. There are no mining rights at present on it, and there is no sign of payable gold ever having been found on that portion.

39. Can you give any reason why?—There seems to be a dividing range going down here between Spring Creek and Chinese Creek, and the gold seems to be on the north-eastern portion of it. On the south-western portion—that is, the hatched portion—the gold does not seem to extend in that direction.

40. Hon. E. BLAKE.] You said that there was a dividing range?—Yes; I was on the top and through it.