

617. *Mr. Jones.*] You have been over it?—I have.

618. *Mr. Gully.*] You have had no experience as a miner at all?—Not much.

619. In fact, your occupation is that of a gardener?—Of late years.

620. And before that, what were you?—About thirty-one years ago I was on the goldfields, south of Grey.

621. That is the only experience you have had of actual *bonâ fide* mining?—I was a short time there. I had a store afterwards.

622. How long did you work at mining thirty-one years ago?—I think, about two months.

623. How long have you been a gardener?—Somewhere about eight or nine years.

624. Did you really exercise any independent opinion in making your observations, or did you go by the general voice of your companions?—No one would lead me. I must go according to my own judgment.

625. Well, I do not mean anything offensive by the word “lead.” Would you not take the opinion of a man better competent to judge than yourself if he differed from your opinion?—I looked upon my own judgment as equal to the others regarding the timber or the land. And though I have had little or no experience in digging, yet I have been on the field for a long time store-keeping, and on the survey for many years.

626. Then you rely on your qualifications as an expert—on your experience as a storekeeper?—Not as a storekeeper.

627. And as a surveyor’s assistant—a chainman, I suppose you were—not a qualified assistant?—Not a qualified assistant.

628. On what ground do you give your opinion that there should be a reserve made along this track in Block 2B?—

*Mr. Gully:* In Block 2B the track is hatched over, but you give as your opinion—as some other witnesses have done—that there ought to be a reservation along that track.

*Hon. E. BLAKE:* The Chesterfield track, Lamplough lead.

629. *Mr. Gully.*] Give your own reasons?—Along tracks, creeks, or rivers we are always inclined to have a little margin. The principal reason was that two Chinamen were working close by that track.

630. Whereabouts were they working?—Close to the edge of the reservation.

631. How long was the track you proposed to assist by reservation?—I should think, about one mile, but I do not know exactly.

632. Did I understand you to say just now that, according to your professional opinion, you treat tracks the same as river-courses, and that you generally make a reserve along tracks as well as river-courses?—That is only my opinion.

633. As a matter of ordinary practice, would you advise a reservation along every track?—Along a bridle-track.

634. Along every bridle-track, and for gold-mining purposes?—Yes; for roads in the future.

635. You really suggest that you recommend a reservation along that bridle-track with the view of there being a road in the future?—Yes.

636. Then, you expect very considerable gold-mining operations on that block. In your journey, how many miles do you think you got over at the longest?—We have travelled as much as twenty and twenty-five miles in a day.

637. Sometimes less, I presume?—In the bush you could not travel a quarter of that.

638. Would that be a fair estimate of what you travelled in the bush?—There are portions where we did not do two miles, perhaps, or four miles in a day.

639. It would depend on the roughness of the country?—Yes.

640. Do you really suggest that your party effectually prospected the whole of these hatched portions of the blocks you went over?—We looked upon the work as done correctly.

641. Will you adopt my language or not? Did you consider that the prospecting work was thoroughly done or not?—Yes.

642. You say it was?—Yes.

643. Not scamped?—Not scamped.

644. In your professional opinion—not as a gardener—do you really suggest that it is possible to efficiently prospect country in the way in which you describe?—I reckon we did it correctly as far as we went.

645. Did you take any special tools with you?—Pick and shovel.

646. And tin dish?—Yes.

647. Is that all?—Bill-hooks.

648. I mean for prospecting?—Yes.

649. Do you happen to know from your mining experience what is the prospecting area granted under the mining regulations?—No.

650. The prospecting area granted under the mining regulations for a party not exceeding three months, and to be worked continuously by two men, is 600yds. by 400yds. Do you say that is too small an area to enable two men to effectually prospect?—I could not give an opinion upon that.

651. You have given one already. If you do not know, say so; do you say from your own experience on the goldfields—do you say it is a reasonable or unreasonable area to be prescribed by the regulations?—I had better not answer that question, because I do not quite catch it.

652. You understand the area I mentioned?—Yes.

653. You understand that it is a condition that two men at least should be continuously engaged on that area?—Yes.

654. And that it is for three months?—Yes.

655. Do you say that is a reasonable area, or that they ought to have more?—I should think that is reasonable.