

128. I think you, in company with Mr. Fraser, made an examination of certain blocks?—Yes.

129. We will take first Block 89?—These are the notes I have made in this book. It is not exactly the field-book, but the notes have been taken from the notes we made as we went along. They have been written up every night while they were fresh in our memory.

130. You are conversant with this Block 89, and you know what this hatching means?—Yes.

131. Will you tell me whether you agree with it?—I quite agree with it, and the reasons are these: that in all this locality about Slaty Creek, Baxter's Creek, and Black Sand Creek, right down to Johnston's Creek, there is no one working. There have been some hundreds of pounds expended upon dams and races, and the whole place is now deserted; there is no one there at all now, and the conclusion we came to was, that if men had commenced digging, cutting races, built dams, and made homes for themselves, it would not be at all likely that they would leave the district if there was gold in it. We therefore came to the conclusion that there was no gold in this locality, and we considered it was very suitable for agricultural and grazing purposes. That is our reason for hatching out these portions.

132. Now, as a practical miner, Mr. Splaine, after having taken that as a sample of the country, if you had a claim there, do you think it would be necessary for you to put down more shafts or dams or water-races in the same locality?—No; I do not think so, from the simple fact that these men having already done that and abandoned it, showed that there could not be payable ground there. The races run parallel within the creeks, and then there are little branch races into the different workings.

133. And you say that ground is not required for *bonâ fide* mining?—That is the conclusion I came to, and for the very simple reason that everything is abandoned—homes, outhouses, and everything. Even the Chinamen's huts are all burned down, and I do not think there can be any gold left if the Chinamen have left the place.

134. Hon. E. BLAKE.] Do you say there is no one working on the hatchings?—No one. There is a man living there named Lewis Simpson, but he was working for Johnson, and working out a bad debt. He is working on the farm.

135. He is not working at mining?—No.

136. Mr. Jones.] We will pass on to Block 89. Do you agree with the hatchings?—There are a lot of workings at Johnson's Creek, going from the east. The men are working on the west boundary of section 6, but Johnson's Creek on this map is shown as going too much to the east. It is more to the westward.

137. Hon. E. BLAKE.] That is, in the hatched part?—The hatched part here comes on to it [indicating on map].

138. Mr. Jones.] You say Johnson's Creek should not be shown on the hatched part?—No, for the very simple fact that it is about 65 chains from this road to the creek-crossing, and it is about 30 chains from the creek-crossing to Charley Larson's claim.

139. Hon. E. BLAKE.] Do I understand that Johnston's Creek is shown here out of place on the reserve?—No.

140. You want us to assume that the reserve did not cover Johnston's Creek?—Johnston's Creek is intended to be included in the reserve.

141. Mr. Jones.] It really runs through the south of the corner of the part reserved?—Yes.

142. And there are a few men working there?—Yes; and there is one race and two dams abandoned.

143. Do you know anything about Sections 86 and 87?—Yes.

144. What have you to say about them?—There is no gold got at what they call Langdon's Claim—not sufficient to warrant their putting a plant on it. It is now called Julian's Claim. I happened unfortunately to be a shareholder in that claim, and dropped more money than I care for. There is a trig. station on this track.

145. You say that very nearly in the centre of this block, running north and south, there is a trig. station?—The lower trig. West of that, towards the Brunnerton side of the country and the coal country, we have never got any gold. We have got nothing out of the Antimony Claim. We have got antimony there. On Boese's Bonanza there was a battery erected; but the whole thing collapsed, and went "bung."

146. To the west, you say, is coal formation?—Yes.

147. What is there to the north?—I have never gone along to the northward; but when you come to the head of Blackball there is gold in the creek—in the Big Creek. There has been a little gold got, but not in payable quantities.

148. Do you agree with the hatchings?—Yes. It is all in the coal country.

149. You see a piece hatched here of 403 acres [indicating on map]. What about that?—I will not say anything much about this place indicated on map. I have prospected there, but did not get anything to pay me.

150. Hon. E. BLAKE.] You cannot say anything about the 300 acres or the 400 acres there?—No. I have been there, but never got gold sufficient to warrant me in saying anything about it.

151. We will go now to the Cobden district [Exhibit No. 97]. Do you know anything about Block 85?—Yes. I have been over this ground, and know a little about it. Our reason for hatching this portion is because the beach extends away out from the road-line—outside of this plan of the workings indicated on the map. It is a sort of beachcombing country. There are a few claims inside of the road-line at Ben Hurst's. While we were there he washed up a paddock, and I think he is very sorry, as I was told by one of the men helping him to clean up that he did not get anything. The reason we hatched that piece was because we considered that 10 chains from this line would include all the country that was really worth looking at for gold. The place has been prospected, but the whole of the works have been done on the flat.

151A. Do you agree with the hatchings?—I quite agree with them. We allowed 30 chains here, taking in Spencer's old claim.

151B. That is, the rectangular block into the hatchings?—Yes. Spencer's race comes along here [indicated on map], and that is already protected. We allowed him 30ft. for the race.