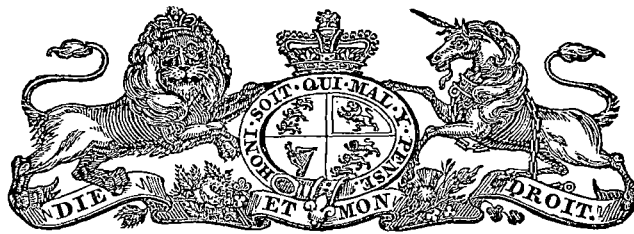


(No. 91.)



1881.

TASMANIA.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

MINERAL RESOURCES, WEST COAST:

REPORT FROM THE SELECT COMMITTEE, WITH MINUTES
OF PROCEEDINGS, AND EVIDENCE.

Brought up by Dr. Crowther, and ordered by the House to be printed,
August 19, 1881.



SELECT COMMITTEE appointed on the 11th August, 1881, to consider the Agricultural and Mineral Resources of the Western Districts of the Island; also, as to the facilities to be afforded by land and water to attain access to the said Districts; also, to enquire into the practicability and cost of Tramways from the supposed Mineral Districts with the Sea-board, or otherwise; with power to send for persons and papers.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE.

MR. DOUGLAS.	MR. BELBIN.
MR. BURGESS.	MR. COX.
MR. HART.	DR. CROWTHER. (<i>Mover.</i>)
MR. LETTE.	

DAYS OF MEETING.

16th, 17th, 18th, 19th August.

WITNESSES EXAMINED AND EXPENSES ALLOWED.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Mr. Robert Wilson.....	2	16	0	Captain Lloyd	1	1	0
Mr. Mark Gardner	3	3	0	Mr. F. Thorne.....	1	1	0
Mr. A. G. Lefroy	1	1	0				

MINUTES OF MEETING OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

No. 1.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 16, 1881.

Present—Dr. Crowther, Mr. Cox, Mr. Hart, Mr. Lette, Mr. Douglas, Mr. Belbin.

1. Dr. Crowther was voted to the Chair.
 2. Mr. Robert Wilson, Mining Prospector, called in and examined.
 3. Mr. Mark Gardner, Mining Agent, called in and examined.
 4. Resolved, that Mr. Gardner's suggestions, addressed to the Lands Department, be obtained for the use of the Committee.
 5. Resolved, that Mr. George Lefroy be requested to attend to-morrow at 11.30.
- The Committee adjourned at ten minutes past One to half-past Eleven to-morrow.

No. 2.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 17, 1881.

Present—Dr. Crowther (Chairman), Mr. Adye Douglas, Mr. Lette, Mr. Cox.

1. Minutes of last meeting read and confirmed.
2. G. A. Lefroy, Esq., examined.
3. Committee adjourned at five minutes past One until to-morrow, at half-past Eleven o'clock.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 18, 1881.

Present—Dr. Crowther, Mr. Cox, Mr. Lette, Mr. Burgess.

1. Minutes of last meeting read and confirmed.
2. Rough statement of lots applied for at the West Coast under the Mineral Lands Act.
3. Captain Lloyd called in and examined.
4. Mr. F. Thorne called in and examined.

Committee adjourned at ten minutes past One to half-past Eleven o'clock to-morrow.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 19, 1881.

Present—Dr. Crowther, Mr. Douglas, Mr. Cox, Mr. Lette, Mr. Burgess, Mr. Belbin.

1. Mr. Thureau having left town is not available as a witness.
2. Resolved that, with regard to Macquarie Harbour, two beacons be at once erected, as suggested by Captain Lloyd; that a jetty with a jib-crane be constructed at Wellington Head, inside Macquarie Harbour; that a receiving house be erected at this point; that Macquarie Harbour be declared a port of entry, and a Customs Officer appointed.
3. Resolved that, with regard to Trial Inlet, moorings be laid down, and a jetty and jib-crane erected.
4. Resolved that, with regard to access to the mines, a macadamised road be at once constructed from Trial Inlet to South Heemskirk, the most central spot, which is about three miles; the route to be such as to give the greatest facilities for traffic.
5. Resolved, that these Resolutions be embodied in a Report, and brought up this day by the Chairman.

R E P O R T.

YOUR Committee have held four meetings, and have examined five witnesses.

Your Committee are impressed with the vast field for the employment of capital and labour which portions of the Western Districts of the Colony seem to offer; and, in making suggestions of what appears to them the desirable course to pursue, they wish to assure the House that the immediate practical means of dealing with the questions submitted to them have absorbed their attention to the exclusion of extraneous considerations of what might possibly be in the future advisable; and they desire emphatically to urge upon the House the absolute necessity of at once proceeding with these works, as any delay means a loss of very great magnitude to the Colony, and to its most energetic and industrious inhabitants. The summer lost means thousands thrown away.

Your Committee have adopted three Resolutions, which they now submit.

Macquarie Harbour.

Resolved, That two beacons be at once erected, as suggested by Captain Lloyd; that a jetty, with a jib-crane, be constructed at Wellington Head, inside Macquarie Harbour; that a receiving house be erected at this point; that Macquarie Harbour be declared a Port of Entry, and a Customs Officer appointed.

Trial Inlet.

Resolved, That moorings be laid down, and a jetty, with jib-crane, erected in Trial Inlet.

Access to the Mines.

Resolved, That a macadamised road be at once constructed from Trial Inlet to South Heemskirk, the most central spot,—which is about three miles; the route to be such as to give the greatest facility for traffic.

Your Committee annex the Evidence which they have taken.

EDWARD LODGE CROWTHER, *Chairman.*

Committee Room, 19th August, 1881.

EVIDENCE.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 16, 1881.

MR. ROBERT WILSON, *called in and examined.*

1. *By the Chairman.*—Your name and profession? I am a mineral prospector, and reside in Launceston.

2. What is your experience of the agricultural resources of the Western Districts of this Island? There is very little agricultural land. I speak of the whole extent of West Coast.

3. What is your experience of its mineral resources? There is a large scope of mineral country, and these are the features of the whole of the West Coast. Almost all minerals will be found along West Coast. I can say from my own experience that payable tin and gold exist.

4. What is the best way to obtain access to this district? By Macquarie Harbour by water; there is a question of the depth of Trial Inlet. I think it is deep enough for a small steamer, and could be made available if a jetty were built there. The soundings should first be taken, and moorings will be required.

5. Which do you consider the natural outlet, Macquarie Harbour, or Pieman and Trial Inlet, these three outlets? The principal district is Mount Heemskirk, which shows a very large tin field, and for this Trial Inlet would be the best outlet, but soundings of the harbour should first be taken.

6. Is a tramway practicable? Yes, by all means.

7. Can you give an estimate of the probable cost of construction? I cannot. There are no ravines to cross; the country is easy for a tramway both to Macquarie Harbour and Trial Inlet, and there is plenty of timber at each end of the route for rails and sleepers. The distance from Heemskirk to Trial Inlet would be 2 or 3 miles, and to Macquarie Harbour about 20 miles, of which about 12 are over levelish country on the line. There would be no heavy work on the short tramway to Trial Inlet. Two bridges would be required on the Macquarie Harbour line; there are a few ravines, but none of importance. There are the Big Henty and Little Henty Rivers, where the sand bars block up the entrance at times. These rivers rise over their banks. There would be no difficulty about bridges except over the Big Henty.

8. What public works do you consider should be undertaken by the Government to develop the resources of the Western District? If after sounding the Trial Inlet it is not considered available, then I think a tramway should be made to Macquarie Harbour, where there should be a jetty. Moorings would not be required there, because the vessels would be inside, safe. Some mode of steam transit should be at once established to Macquarie Harbour.

9. *In reply to Mr. Hart.*—I travelled by Lake St. Clair, and prospected the King and Pieman Rivers. I think a bridle track could be opened from the head of the Derwent (Bronte), and down through the country to the Pieman and King Rivers. I came through that country in the months of April and November; there are no rivers to fear, but you meet with much snow. (I mark on the map B. my route.) A road could be constructed only at considerable cost.

10. *In reply to Mr. Belbin.*—Trial Inlet is small; there are about 150 feet between the reefs. I do not think it safe for a vessel to lay there at any time. The ketch *Trial* is the only vessel that has got in, and she is only 7 tons. The reefs protect the entrance on each side.

11. *In reply to Mr. Lette.*—I have been four times through by Mount Bischoff, once by Eldon Range, and the other three times by the Bischoff track.

12. *In reply to Mr. Hart.*—I think the best and cheapest route for a road would be by Circular Head along the coast. The shortest practicable route would be by Woolnorth, round along the coast, about 55 miles. I know nothing of the North Bischoff valley. The country is broken all the way to Pieman by Bischoff. Hall's present track from Bischoff is a fair one.

13. *In reply to Mr. Lette.*—The distance from Mount Heemskirk to Bronte is probably 60 or 70 miles. I have been four times along there. The country is fair, as far as scrub goes. I have passed by Mount Ramsey; on towards Heemskirk is very rough country. Even a dog refused to follow on some of the ranges.

14. *In reply to Mr. Cox.*—The present best route by foot track or bridle track at little expense to Mount Heemskirk from Hobart for 9 months in the year is by the Ouse or Derwent. From Launceston by Bischoff. There is a bridle track by Deloraine and Chudleigh. Mr. Field's stock-riders go that way; it is all hilly country. I have been that way once. By winding round hills a track can be made anywhere. The Chudleigh route, viâ Bischoff to Mount Heemskirk, is rougher than that from Hamilton to Bronte. Snow is heavy during part of the year, but I question whether it would stop traffic. The distance from Hobart to Hamilton is 46 miles, and from Hamilton to Bronte 47 miles.

MR. MARK GARDNER, *Mining Engineer, resident of Victoria, called in and examined.*

15. *By the Chairman.*—What is your experience of the agricultural resources of the Western District of this Island? I have none.

16. What is your experience of its mineral resources? I can only speak of the track from Mount Bischoff to Mount Heemskirk and its vicinity. As regards the mineral resources of Mount Bischoff and Pieman River. The bauera scrub is great for two days' journey, and then there are indications of terraces remaining of old water-courses where deep workings will be found within one day of Pieman River. The gold workings so far have been what is called gully raking, but where the gullies run into the point of the ranges there is indication of deeper gold workings. It is my impression that this mineral country continues

to the Pieman. There is nothing there very striking for minerals till within four or five miles of Heemskirk, then the tin or porphyritic lodes become prominent. I prospected Heemskirk and paid my first visit there in March, 1881, and I was struck with the immense mineral resources of tin. On my return to Melbourne I advised the gentlemen with whom I was associated to make further explorations. On my return from Melbourne in April I went round by the coast in the ketch *Trial*, and entered Boat Harbour, landed there and went to Mount Heemskirk. My experience of Boat Harbour is that it is admirably adapted for vessels or steam launches of 20 tons. There would be no difficulty in taking steam craft in in any weather. Pulpit Point, which can be seen for 20 miles, would form a beacon or light-house to the direct channel. There would be no difficulty in getting in if the place was once buoyed. Passing over the shallow part, where five feet were marked, I believe there would be found 10 feet. There is not much water at the entrance, a vessel properly moored could lie here in any weather. I consider a jetty, jib crane, and mooring buoys indispensable, also a proper survey to mark the channel. The jetty should be on the south side where it would not interfere with the scour which sets in from the reach all round. The scour keeps the Boat Harbour open. I don't think there would be any difficulty in placing a few concrete blocks and thus make it perfectly secure. A few hundred pounds expended on concrete blocks would ensure safety. The scour is from the sea.

17. What is the best way to obtain access to this district? By Macquarie Harbour for larger vessels, but by Boat Harbour for the smaller ones, the latter decidedly.

18. Is a tramway practicable? Yes; no doubt it is the best. I prefer it.

19. Can you give any estimate of the probable cost of construction? I estimate the cost of a tramway to the top of the cliff, a central spot available for most of the present mines, would be from three to four thousands, from the Boat Harbour, a distance of about three miles. I have made an estimate that with a steam launch it will cost £5000, this would leave £3000 or £4000 for the tramway. I estimate for a tram with iron rails, 28 lbs. to the yard. The Mount Heemskirk mineral resources are lodes of a very permanent character throughout, the best I have ever seen in any part of the world. On Packer's Creek the lode has been denuded to the depth of 1000 feet, where the lodes are as distinct as on the highest part of the mount. The whole area of the district is about 10 miles square. The lodes in this district are as distinctly marked as squares on a chess-board. In fact, it is a net-work of lodes traceable for miles. The lodes have not been tested to a depth, but so many parts of them are found tin bearing that leads me to say that it will be the Cornwall of the Southern Hemisphere. I believe them to be permanent, and would be highly valuable if mined in a systematic manner. It is exceedingly difficult for strangers to find available land not taken up for want of correct information and proper plans. No proper marks are put up. Numbers of claims are marked out carelessly. I sent a suggestion to the Lands Department which may be useful to the Committee. The present depôt at Macquarie Harbour is at Swan Bay, 6 miles within the harbour. I think the depôt should be close inside the heads on the south side, where deep water can be found, so that a steam launch could make a trip in about two hours, the distance being about 16 miles. The immediate attention of Government should be devoted to providing the harbour accommodation, and proper survey of the entrance of Boat Harbour. I am now in a position to offer from a Company to make the tramway, if the permission of the Lands and Works Department is obtained at once, with security for a term of years; the Government to do the surveys and make the jetties. We do not want to lose the summer, as there are forty or fifty thousand pounds ready to be spent on the mines, if assent is given at once. There is the utmost necessity for immediate action. I would not recommend a large outlay overland; it is more important to have water communication. I passed three months at Heemskirk and was there previously. The works suggested by me should take precedence of everything, being an absolute necessity for immediately developing the district. It would lead to a simpler mode of getting stores. Horse feed, which at present is about £16 a ton, would be £3 or £4. The constable at Macquarie Harbour should be a Clearing Officer of the Customs. I know nothing of Mount Ramsay.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 17, 1881.

GEORGE ANTHONY LEFROY, *Esq., examined.*

20. What is your name and profession? George Anthony Lefroy. I am a Surveyor. I have been residing at Swan River, Western Australia.

21. Have you been over the western portion of Tasmania? During the months of June and July last I travelled from Waratah to Macquarie Harbour, *via* the Corinna or Pieman, and Mount Heemskirk; and hand in a map which shows the route traversed by me.

22. What opinion did you form in making that journey as to the agricultural prospects of the country? I am of opinion that from Waratah to the Pieman it will never be a rich agricultural district. From Waratah to the first Government hut I think the country will be valuable, as Tasmania progresses, as grass land. From the first Government hut to within two miles of the Pieman the country is of the most barren description, and I do not think will ever grow anything but button grass. On the banks of the Pieman, near the Government store, there is a small quantity of land that might be used for agricultural purposes, perhaps for potatoes, but there is only a limited area of it. I then proceeded from the Government Stores to the Heads (Foster's). There is a small extent of country there that would pay if laid down in English grasses, but it will not grow wheat to pay. From near the Pieman Heads to the Montagu mine (Mount Heemskirk) the country is, almost without exception, the most barren country possible. In the Three-mile Forest there is a small extent of country which may at some future date pay to cultivate, it is about half way between Heemskirk and the Corinna, Pieman, Heads. In the vicinity of Mount Heemskirk and Mount Agnew the land is of a poor description, and consists of a few inches of soil on a quartz wash. At the Big Henty, on the south or left bank of the river, and round Conrad's store the land would be well suited for gardens or grass. The soil

of Macquarie Harbour around Swan Basin, which is the only portion I have seen, is of exactly the same character as the country round Heemskirk and Agnew.

23. What is your opinion of its mineral resources? From the Arthur River to the Bauera Hut, a distance of about 20 miles, I saw nothing that struck me as being a mineral bearing country, but my experience in tin and gold working is limited. From Bauera Hut to the Pieman, a distance of about 12 or 13 miles, the country is gold bearing. In a creek about a mile south of the Pieman I picked up specimens showing oxyde of copper, but I do not think that of much importance as copper is low in price and hardly pays to work.

24. What about tin? About four miles north of the Montagu shaft I saw a tin-bearing lode that has been discovered and opened by Foster, and it struck me that the show was very good as tin was plainly visible to the naked eye; there was great promise of its being a payable lode, and I think will prove profitable to work; I traced it myself for upwards of 300 feet. The most mineral-looking place that I visited was the Montagu Mine at Heemskirk: and the east and west lode is the best defined I have seen anywhere: I have every confidence in the mine proving permanent. I think the West Coast, with fair treatment and Government aid, must become one of the wealthiest mineral districts in Tasmania. I think that for some years to come Trial Inlet will be all that is necessary for Heemskirk. The best way, in my opinion, of connecting it with the mines would be by a macadamised road, as in that case no mining company would get a monopoly. If constructed from the Trial Inlet through Climie's sections and a little south of the Montagu shaft it would answer the purpose of most of the mines now working.

25. *By Mr. Douglas.*—Do you consider Trial Inlet safe for small craft? I do not think it safe to lay in for any length of time. It is very small; I should imagine not more than 5 acres in extent.

26. What winds make it unsafe generally? Any wind between N.W. and S.W.

27. How would you avail yourself of Trial Inlet? By means of a steam launch of from 15 to 20 tons, which might run from Macquarie Harbour to the Trial Inlet, discharge, and return to Macquarie Harbour the same day,—the distance being only 24 miles. There is about 8 feet of water inside the entrance to Trial Inlet.

28. In order to make the harbour available for such purposes would it not require a jetty and crane? A landing place with a crane would be required. I think a wall of piles run out say 100 feet parallel with one of the lines of rock, if the bottom will allow, then plank inside and fill up with rubble: it need not be of an expensive character. I would suggest that a proper survey should be made.

29. Do you consider that a road can be made with facility from Trial Inlet to Heemskirk? I do.

30. How many miles would it be from Trial Inlet to Montagu shaft? About $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

31. You are of opinion that a macadamised road would be best? Yes, I think it would be preferable to a tram. The materials for a macadamised road are at hand most of the way.

32. Did you continue your journey down to Macquarie Harbour? if so, what is your opinion as to the cost of making roads from Heemskirk to Macquarie Harbour? I could not give any idea, as my track was chiefly by the beach. I think it would be better to utilise Trial Inlet at present rather than incur the expense of making a road and erecting bridges by Macquarie Harbour.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 18, 1881.

CAPTAIN LLOYD, *Master Mariner, Hobart, called in and examined.*

33. *By the Chairman.*—You have an extensive knowledge of the West Coast round by Macquarie Harbour? Yes, I know Port Davey and all the other harbours. I was the first to take a party into the Pieman River.

34. Which of the three harbours, Macquarie Harbour, Trial Inlet (or Boat Harbour), or the Pieman, do you consider the best? Macquarie Harbour is the best. I have no personal knowledge of Trial Inlet.

35. What depth of water is there at Macquarie Harbour? Nine feet at the bar. A vessel trading there should not draw more than six feet six at the outside. If the bar is breaking no vessel can get over. Vessels drawing more have to wait a long time for a smooth sea. When there is no break on the bar a vessel drawing seven feet can get out and in. The bar is safer for a short vessel than a long one. The *Swansea Packet* when drawing 5 feet once grounded, for a moment, on the bar between the rollers.

36. Have you been trading with Macquarie Harbour long? Yes, for about twenty years, and regularly for over fourteen years, making about four trips each year. In the fifty trips I have had to run back four or five times to Port Davey. We can get to Macquarie Harbour easier when the wind is from the S. than if it is from the N., the S. wind making smooth water. With a favourable wind from N. the Pieman is better; I have only been in there and out once. The N. wind makes a smooth bar at Pieman. It is easier to get into Macquarie Harbour than the Pieman, the latter having a very narrow and dangerous entrance.

37. *In reply to Mr. Cox.*—There is anchorage outside of Macquarie Harbour with anything but Northerly, N.W., or W. winds; when these winds blow you can go over the bar, if not breaking too heavy; as soon as you are inside the entrance island there is safe anchorage everywhere. A vessel could lay close to the shore just inside Macquarie Harbour on the south side, at a place called Wellington Head. Here is a little bay where a vessel can lay all the year round at single anchor. A beacon put up on N.E. side of "Cap and Bonnet," and one on S.W. side of "Entrance Island," with a line leaving these beacons a yard open, the position taken to be abreast of Nobby's Rocks, would take a vessel over the bar in the deepest water. There is deep water close to the shore at Wellington Head. At twenty yards from the shore it is three or four fathoms deep; any amount of water for a vessel to lie after it is over the bar. There is no

place better for a vessel than at Wellington Head. Here she could unload with a 20-foot plank. There is plenty of fuel and fresh water.

38. Is there generally such still water inside as to allow of goods being transhipped? Yes, as easily as in the docks. Vessels can be lashed together safely all the year round. There is hardly a part of the bar or bay that I have not seen or sounded. There are a good many reefs in it and numerous sandbanks, which makes the channel very intricate.

MR. FREDERICK THORNE, *Mining Prospector, Hobart, called in and examined.*

39. *By Chairman.*—What is your experience of the agricultural resources of the Western District of this island? I have been to Heemskirk, Pieman, Trial Inlet, and Macquarie Harbour, and I consider it not extensive; there are patches for garden-work.

40. What is your experience of its mineral resources? They are vast, from the Pieman to Heemskirk. I speak from fact of seeing gold and tin, and from what I have heard from miners.

41. Do you think them permanent? I do. I have seen tin-stones of 200 lbs., evidently shed from lodes. I have seen lodes that you could walk along for 30 to 40 chains; samples from 26 feet at Montagu and 40 at Cumberland, where the lode showed better than at the surface; I followed the cliff down to the sea, where the lode, denuded by nature, showed 150 feet from the surface. You can see where the lode runs into the sea. This is South Heemskirk District, which I know to be valuable for fully 5 miles by 3. I have been acquainted with it for three years.

42. What is the best way to obtain access to the District? By steam communication with Macquarie Harbour. The sea should be the base of operations, and Macquarie Harbour the port. A depôt should be established just inside Macquarie Harbour at Wellington Head, where there is a nice little nook, where vessels could easily unload with a twenty-foot plank, or tranship to other vessels. There should be a Receiving House there, and a Customs Officer. Then a steam launch should be provided which would draw about 5 feet of water, and carry from 10 to 15 tons of cargo under deck. Trial Inlet to be reached by this launch, the distance being about 18 miles; a steamer could get in except when the wind is blowing hard from west. You can get in or out of Trial Inlet 200 out of 365 days in the year; and if moorings, a jetty and a jib-crane were there vessels could ship or unload. You would then have to cut a road from Trial Inlet up to the Mines. A good macadamised road would be the best in my opinion, because this could be undertaken at once. A tramway would involve an engineering survey and delay. The road should be cut from Trial Inlet up by Montagu and Cumberland, and stop for the present at Cumberland. The cost would not be expensive, I should say £3000 would be sufficient for a road, moorings, jetty, &c., all that I have suggested. These should be properly planned out on the spot. Steamers could lay off Trial Inlet and tranship goods into smaller ones.

SUGGESTIONS for the West Coast Committee by GEO. A. LEFROY.

THAT the Government afford the protection of the law to the inhabitants of the West Coast by means of a resident Justice of the Peace, who would represent the Government, and might also be Mining Registrar and Surveyor for a few years to come.

Up to the present time I believe there have been several instances of prospectors spending several weeks of valuable time in prospecting, only to find at the end of that time that they were on some one else's ground. These cases, I believe, are wholly and solely due to the impossibility of getting reliable information. If these men had been able to get a plan showing the manner in which the latest sections had been taken up, they would have been saved many pounds.

Now that the Government is going to spend money on Public Works, I think that the Government representative should be a man capable of seeing that the various works are properly carried out

There is not the slightest doubt that, before any work of a permanent character is undertaken, Macquarie Harbour should be properly surveyed, and by a man of marine experience. The survey of Macquarie Harbour and a portion of the coast would soon set at rest where the natural outlet of Heemskirk is.

For the present all that I think necessary is a powerful steam launch and landing facilities at Boat Harbour, and a fortnightly steamer of at least 200 tons to Macquarie Harbour.

ROUGH STATEMENT of Lots applied for at the West Coast, under "The Mineral Lands Act."

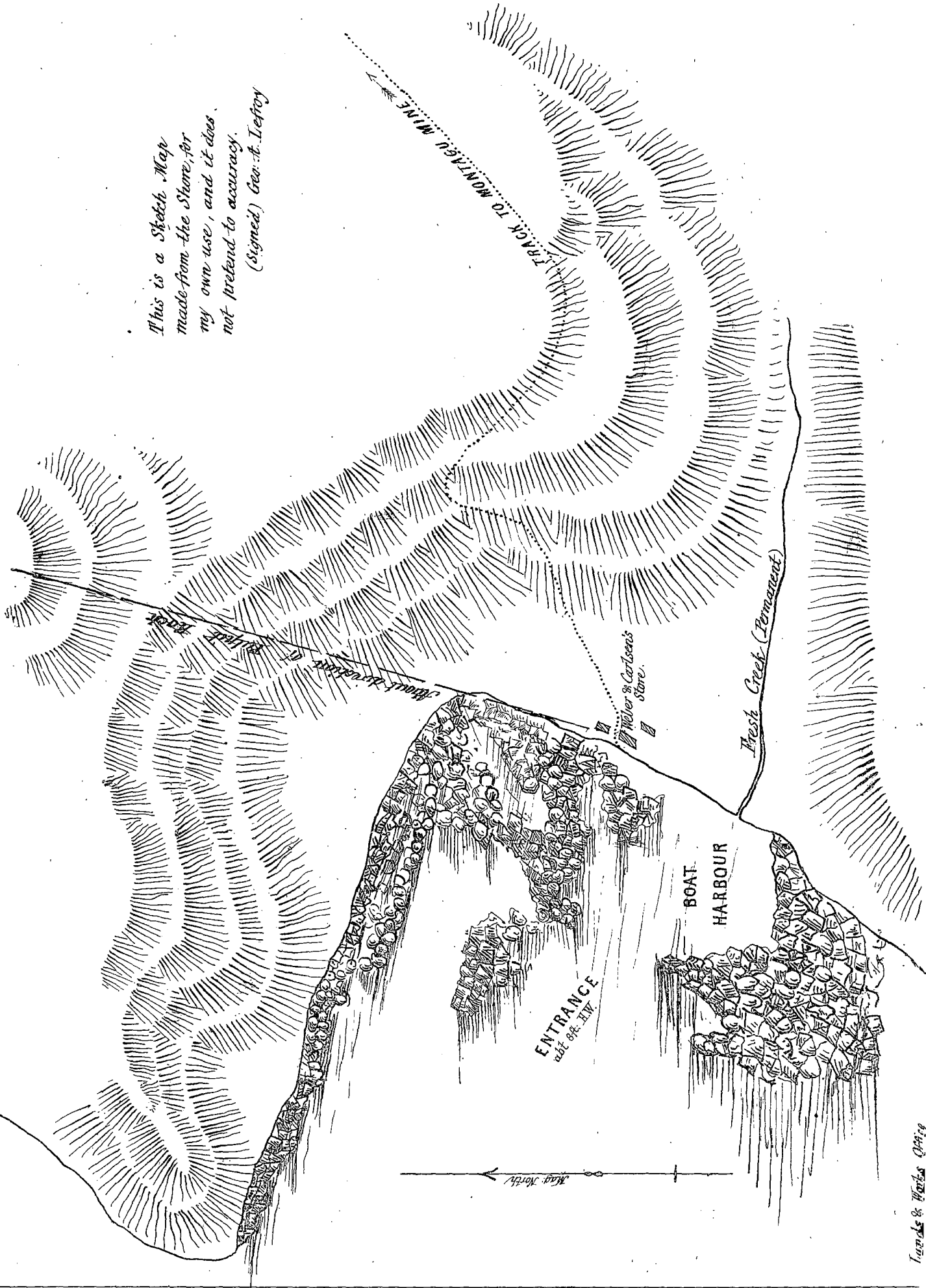
No. of Applications under Survey	51	£
Probable Revenue		785
No. of Leases in force to date	20	
Actual Revenue		350
TOTAL		£1135

Lands and Works Office, August 17, 1881.

H. J. HULL.

This is a Sketch Map
made from the Store, for
my own use, and it does
not pretend to accuracy.

(Signed) Geo. A. Tefroy



(*In continuation of H.A. Paper No. 91.*)

MINUTES OF MEETING OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 25, 1881.

Present—Dr. Crowther, Mr. Cox, Mr. Lette, Mr. Burgess.

1. Captain Reid called in and examined.
2. Mr. Job Savage called in and examined.
3. Mr. D. F. Scott called in and examined.

Decided—That a Supplementary Report be brought up to day by the Chairman, attaching all the Evidence.

SECOND REPORT.

Your Committee have taken further Evidence on the Resources of the West Coast, and have had their attention strongly drawn to the importance of the Pieman River as a navigable river, tapping a large and valuable District.

They have been surprised at the apparent facility of access of this river; and in the hope that it may be duly utilised, they beg to append the evidence taken.

EDWARD LODGE CROWTHER, *Chairman*.

Committee Room, 25th August, 1881.

EVIDENCE.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24, 1881.

J. E. RISBY, *Esq., M.H.A., attended, and gave evidence as follows.*

43. *By Chairman.*—Will you please describe what you know of Macquarie Harbour? I have been in there 6 or 8 times. The difficulty of getting in depends on the weather. I cannot say how often I have had to turn back from inability to enter the harbour. I have always succeeded in getting into Macquarie Harbour if I could arrive off the heads. I once went in, compulsorily, in a gale of wind, my vessel only being of shallow draught, but it was dangerous.

44. What is the depth of water at the bar? The bar is about two miles inside Cape Sorell, and is very dangerous to cross with N.W. or N. gales. In fair weather the water on the bar is 9 feet. There is not much rise and fall of the tide, which generally depends on the weather—running in with westerly winds and out with easterly. I have been detained there unable to get out for 17 days in a sailing vessel, bar-bound. I doubt if a steamer could have got out. If the bar is well up you cannot command the vessel. On one occasion a vessel drawing 9 feet 6 inches came out with me. I have not been in Macquarie Harbour for 23 years.

45. *By Mr. Douglas.*—Is the entrance plain and distinct? Yes, at Hell's Gates inside the bar it is about 300 feet wide.

46. Is there any good place for a jetty? Yes, on South Head, indeed anywhere inside, you can land goods with a plank for a mile of good landing, water deep alongside the shore. On the north side there are flat shores and shallow water.

47. Where would a depôt be put, and would it be practicable to communicate by steamer with Trial Inlet? Yes, in fair weather you could easily communicate from a depôt at South Head.

48. Which would be the best course to Heemskirk—overland or by water? I should prefer the land if there is much traffic, which is likely to be permanent; but if only temporary, then the best way would be by Trial Inlet by small steamer. I know the West Coast as a whole.

49. In reply to *Mr. Belbin*.—You could not work the West Coast more than four months in the year. This winter has been an exceedingly fine one.

50. *By Mr. Lette*.—Where would you have a jetty if the road is adopted? You would not require a jetty; you could land your goods anywhere with a plank on the north side at Swan Point; there is no sea; it is as calm as if in a dock. I do not know anything of the Pieman River.

MR. G. C. WEBER, *Owner and Master of the "Trial" cutter, called in and examined.*

51. *By Chairman*.—What do you know of the three harbours on the West Coast—Pieman River, Trial Inlet, and Macquarie Harbour? I have had practical experience of the three. I have been in Macquarie Harbour and Trial Inlet about ten times, and into Pieman River five times.

52. Which way would you work the traffic to the best advantage to Mount Heemskirk; state in your own language? By water. If a jetty was erected at Macquarie Harbour, I would send machinery by a large vessel there from Launceston. I would erect a small jetty and jib-crane, and a store-house just inside the Head at Wellington Head, which is at the first bend on the south. I would re-ship goods in a steam launch to Trial Inlet. You can get to Trial Inlet from Macquarie Harbour, when the weather is favourable, four or five times in a week. I have had to wait 14 days in my own cutter. In a steamer I could have got out in a week.

53. What depth of water is there in Trial Inlet? Where my vessel lay it was four feet at low water. Vessels drawing more than four feet could not remain over the tide in Trial Inlet without striking. If a breakwater were put along the reef on the south side it would form a safe boat harbour at any time for vessels drawing more than four feet. If the breakwater was finished there would be seven feet of water at all times. No doubt a breakwater would be an expensive piece of work. A jetty would be required 40 or 50 feet long; this and the jib-crane are necessities. I would put a road from the jetty to the mines. There is no difficulty in entering Trial Inlet. Inside you would want moorings—say, an anchor with one fluke, a chain of about 20 fathoms, and a large mooring-buoy, with two stern-buoys, with 60-fathom chain of lighter make than the other, so as to make double moorings.

54. *By Mr. Douglas*.—How would you convey heavy machinery? If the weather is favourable for Macquarie Harbour it is favourable for Trial Inlet. Machinery weighing two or three tons could be safely landed by crane at the jetty.

55. Do you know the Pieman, and is it more difficult than Macquarie Harbour? The weather being fair for Macquarie Harbour is also fair for all the harbours on the Coast, though we could enter Macquarie Harbour in rougher weather than we could the Pieman. I have never found it too rough to enter Macquarie Harbour, but I have found it so at the Pieman.

56. Have you any idea of the cost of erecting jetties at Macquarie Harbour and Trial Inlet? I cannot say.

57. Within £2000? I think so. The expense at Macquarie Harbour would be little. It would be more at Trial Inlet. I should proceed from Macquarie Harbour to Trial Inlet by steam launch at present. Any vessel that could go over the bar at Macquarie Harbour could safely land goods at the proposed jetty; but in going further up the harbour there are flats which a vessel drawing more than five feet could not safely pass over. It is about seven or eight miles from the bar to Swan Basin. I should not hesitate to take in a vessel drawing eight feet of water.

58. If a jetty was built at Trial Inlet, would it stand the weather? Yes, it would have to be built on solid rock, screwed to rocks which are dry at low water; the reach is very strong; rollers come right up the bay at spring tides. The expense of erecting a jetty would be great, as a common jetty would not stand the drawback of water. I only beached my boats once. I have laid in Trial Harbour three to five days at a stretch without bad weather. If we can get into Trial Inlet we can get into the Pieman provided there is not a strong fresh out of the river. I would nearly as soon go into the Pieman as I would into Trial Inlet with a steamer. At the Pieman a buoy is specially required just over the bar at the entrance of the river. A sailing vessel going in loses the wind and becomes becalmed. There is a strong fresh which forces the vessel astern. I would place a good heavy anchor well up the river with a buoy attached to it, so strong that a hawser could be taken out to it. The depth of water on the bar at the Pieman is 10 feet. A vessel drawing 7 feet would be safe for 25 miles up the river. I know, from my own knowledge, of splendid beds of pine and blackwood timbers near the Pieman River. I have always successfully landed cargo at Trial Inlet. Assuming the breakwater to be erected, the jetty there would be likely to be permanent.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 25, 1881.

CAPTAIN JOHN REID, *of the Steamer "Amy," called in and examined.*

59. *By Chairman*.—Do you know the three harbours on the West Coast—Macquarie Harbour, Pieman River, and Trial Inlet? I know the two first, and have taken a steamer once into Macquarie Harbour, where I went for shelter, and four times into Pieman. My vessel, drawing six feet six inches,

went easily over the bar at Macquarie Harbour. We sounded all the way and found 9 feet good on the bar. At the Pieman the lowest soundings on the bar that I have found was 9 feet 6 inches. It is 14 feet at deepest. It is very difficult to get soundings at the Pieman owing to the heavy sea. Macquarie Harbour has as good an entrance as you could wish for vessels fit for the trade. It would make a good centre of operations on account of its easy access in all weathers. I could go in with the *Amy* in any weather. As to Trial Inlet, I would go in there with the *Amy* from what I have heard. I am now taking 20 tons of cargo, and have engaged to land it in Trial Inlet. It would be necessary to have a wharf at Macquarie Harbour, with a crane. It should be erected just inside the Heads, where there is smooth deep water; and goods could be transhipped if necessary and go by suitable steamer to Trial Inlet. With regard to the Pieman, I have found no difficulty in getting over the bar with a steamer. On one occasion I crossed the bar in a gale of wind from the south-west, which is the worst wind for vessels entering the Pieman, owing to the heavy sea it makes. I have steamed up the Pieman as far as the first Fall, which is 24 miles, and carried 60 tons of cargo. There is any depth of water, in some parts as much as 24 fathoms. There are no dangers in the river; the *Mangana* could steam up if once over the bar, which is of sand. The country around is of pine, myrtle, and blackwood timbers, down to the banks of the rivers; I have seen good beds of pine. The last time I passed over the bar was at night, and it was dark and blowing hard from east.

MR. JOB SAVAGE, *Storekeeper at the Pieman River, called in and examined.*

60. *By Chairman.*—What is your experience of the agricultural resources of the West Coast? There is no good land there. It is all in belts of 50, 500, or 1000 acres along the rivers and marshes, which are liable to be flooded. There is plenty of pine and blackwood timber on the banks of the River Pieman and its tributaries for 24 miles up.

61. What is your experience of its mineral resources? Very good. I have been there for two years; have a large family depending on me; and I don't intend to give it up. There is very little tin on the Pieman, but there is gold. Not two men are there who are not getting payable gold whilst they are actually mining. I know men there who have got 50 ounces in three weeks recently. I have bought it from them, and they are prepared with more to sell.

62. Do you know Mount Heemskirk? I do not.

63. You know Macquarie Harbour? Yes, I have been in there. There is little gold there. None of any consequence is found there in a payable quantity as yet. I had 14 men at work there. For Mount Heemskirk, Macquarie Harbour would be the best base of operations; but for the Pieman I should ship direct from Hobart or Launceston. I have been in to the Pieman four times. I went over the bar in a steamer. I went once in a sailing vessel. There is no difficulty at the Pieman bar for a steamer. We waited at the bar once in a steamer till daylight came before we went over. At another time it was dark when we got in. Foster's section is at Heemskirk, but the outlet would be at Pieman. With regard to the nautical survey of Macquarie Harbour, it is the same as 60 years ago when it was officially surveyed. I have verified the soundings myself. On that survey I could go down the coast in the dark. I know the coast from Launceston to Cape Sorell, and have been many years at sea.

MR. D. F. SCOTT, *Government Storekeeper at Pieman, called in and examined.*

64. *By Chairman.*—What is your experience of the agricultural resources of the West Coast? There is very little good ground on the Pieman River. It is in small patches of 5 or 10 acres. There are large quantities of pine and blackwood timbers. The pine is not now close to the river. It has been cut; but it is plentiful 30 miles higher up the river.

65. What is your experience of the mineral resources? There is a good future for this part of the West Coast. There is good gold on the Whyte River, also on the Upper Savage River. There are payable terraces for gold on the west fall of the Whyte. It is thought that gold will be found in the Meredith Range which is of granite. It has been already found there of a rough and rugged character, indicating reefs. The same remark applies to Slater's prospect, known as Lefroy, further up the river. I have seen small quantities of tin on the Meredith Range, but not payable. Machinery should be sent to the Pieman by sea; the basis should be the sea. I have seen the bar. I went overland to Pieman, which should be the outlet for tin from the sections at North Pieman, also Gap sections (Foster's, floated in Melbourne), and Emu Bay sections. If the Government track from the store is improved, it would be a good road to Foster's and the Emu Bay sections; this is a distance of 10 to 14 miles, and is now partly formed, the track having been scrubbed. A nearer track could be got by coming out at Donnelly's Dépôt at the S. side of the fall; this would shorten the track five miles. The present track to Long Plains should be improved: it is 25 miles from the store to Long Plains towards Bischoff. To pack provisions from Bischoff would cost £20 a ton, whilst, if provisions were landed at Pieman Dépôt, they could be obtained at £3 a ton; or on the ground at Long Plains at £12. There is no grass on the plains. I scattered some seed myself. Were grass sown, stock could be travelled.