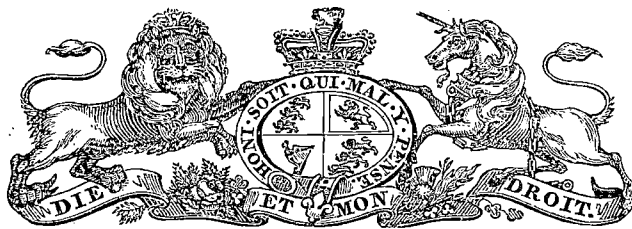


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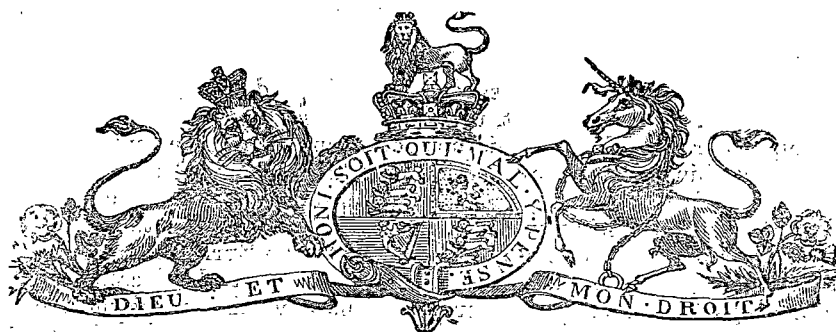
PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

HOTEL OR SANATORIUM AT "THE SPRINGS,"
MOUNT WELLINGTON:

REPORT BY MR. K. L. RAHBK, M. DAN. ASS. C.E.

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HOTEL OR SANATORIUM AT "THE SPRINGS," MOUNT WELLINGTON.

REPORT BY MR. K. L. RAHBEK, M. DAN. ASS. C.E.

Mines Department, Hobart, 5th October, 1900.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 28th ultimo, in which you request me to inspect and report upon the advisability or otherwise of granting 20 acres of land or less for a site for an Hotel or Sanatorium at or near a spot on Mount Wellington called "The Springs"; and also to report upon the possibility of erecting an establishment with proper sanitary accommodation with a view to minimising the evils which at present exist.

I have, accordingly, visited a part of the Hobart Waterworks and noted the arrangements for admitting water, the by-wash, and also the way in which the Sandy Bay Creek has been carried outside and round the southern side of the upper reservoir. I did not inspect the lower reservoir, but went from here up to the "Springs" on Mount Wellington.

These, I found, consisted of a number of smaller springs which have been connected by an open drain, running in a direction south to north until a certain point is reached, where the water is turned down a gully which forms the beginning of Bower Creek, and which again sends its water into the Hobart Waterworks Service Reservoirs mentioned above.

Due north, and at a distance of about 200 feet from where the drain is turned into Bower Creek, stands an inhabited cottage, which, I understand, belongs to the Municipal Council. A shelter-house for the convenience of visitors is built about halfway between the cottage and "The Springs."

Immediately from where the cottage is situated a spur runs out towards the east, the spur being about 300 to 400 feet wide, and say, 1500 feet long. Just north from the spur, and about the same height as "The Springs," a creek, called the Hobart Rivulet—takes its rise, and this creek is also a source for a part of the Hobart water supply, as well as a source of water supply for the Cascade Brewery.

The eastern end of the spur terminates in sandstone cliffs, and immediately below these the country falls abruptly towards the south-east, east, and north-east, and two creeks start from here, namely, Dunn's Creek and the Sandy Bay Creek, which runs towards the north-east.

Such, then, is the description of the part of the country in question on Mount Wellington. On the above-mentioned spur are the hotel sites. The upper site is only about 200 to 300 feet east from "The Springs" cottage, and the view to be had from here is truly magnificent, being probably one of the finest in Australia. So much greater is the pity that this site cannot by any means be utilized for a hotel, or in fact for any habitation whatever, that is, so long as the Bower Creek and the Hobart Rivulet are sources for domestic water supply. The site is just on the watershed between the two last-named creeks, and forms part of their catchment area, and the rainfall or any drainage there is bound eventually to gravitate into one or both of the catchment areas, no matter whether it is travelling on top of the surface or below.

The lower hotel site is about 1500 feet east from "The Springs" cottage; the ground there is more level, but drains, nevertheless, to both the above-named creeks, and what was said of the

upper site holds equally good here, the only difference being that it will take the rain water or eventual drainage a longer time to travel, but this must ultimately find its way to one or other or both of the said catchment areas.

The soil consists of humus mixed with sand, but only to a depth of from 15 to 18 inches, when sandstone is met with, and it could not, therefore, be used for filter beds, as a thickness of 6 to 8 feet at least would be required, and I did not notice any other site suitable for filter beds. But in any case I do not think that the authorities who have charge of the public water supply could or would allow any kind of drainage purification to take place on the catchment area from which they obtain water for domestic purposes. In my opinion the authorities are running a great risk in allowing a family to reside in the cottage at "The Springs," where, moreover, the presence of the shelter-shed induces the public at large to visit the locality, and I strongly advise that "The Springs" cottage, the shelter-sheds, and any other sheds there may be in the vicinity, be removed as soon as possible to, say some place below the sand-cliffs, and the place at "The Springs" to be thoroughly cleaned.

The fact that, so far, no epidemic has broken out on account of polluted water supply is no guarantee that it will never occur. In reality, the experiences of other places point to the conclusion that such a calamity may be reckoned upon to take place sooner or later if the purity of the water is not guarded with the utmost vigilance. Many instances of the disastrous results following upon using a polluted water source for domestic purposes can be given, but I shall here only relate one which I think is descriptive, and which took place at Hamburg only a few years ago.

Hamburg and Altona are two large cities built close together on the banks of the River Elba, from which both cities draw their domestic water supply. But while Altona had its intake from the river at places where the water was not considered always to be quite pure, and had, consequently, constructed filter-beds, whereby the water was artificially purified, Hamburg, on the other hand, took its water supply so many miles up the river that the water there was considered to be pure throughout all seasons of the year. For a number of years everything went well; then, about eight years ago, cholera broke out in Hamburg, and in a few weeks several thousands of people died, and it was established as a fact that this had been brought about by the polluted water supply; and Altona, which is built together with Hamburg, did not suffer to any extent, because their water supply was comparatively pure. Immediately the authorities at Hamburg found out the reason of the outbreak of the epidemic they set to work and constructed an elaborate system of filter-beds for their water supply. These works were very expensive, as the construction had to be carried out during night and day, but, since they have been finished and kept in efficient working order, the public health at Hamburg has proved itself superior to that of Altona. I consider this to be a striking example of the importance of keeping the public water supply pure.

It appears that this community, in comparison with others, has every reason to appreciate its seemingly naturally pure water supply, and should, by every lawful means, try to keep it so. That other communities are not so well off, I shall show, by relating another instance nearer home.

The Brisbane Board of Waterworks has, so far, expended over half a million of pounds sterling on their waterworks, and yet they are now making arrangements for constructing filter-beds for the artificial purification of their water supply: the expenses for constructing these filter-beds will amount to at least £100,000. It, therefore, seems, leaving all judicial and moral obligations out of the question, that it is advantageous, from a mere financial point of view, to keep the public water supply as pure as possible, and not, by any inducements whatever, run the risk of having it polluted.

In conformity with what has been demonstrated, it seems to me that no one should be allowed to build a hotel or sanatorium on or even in too close proximity to any of the catchment areas for the sources of the public water supply, and, therefore, the application for twenty acres or less of land on Mount Wellington, at "The Springs," should not be granted.

I have noticed that a good carriage-road has been made right up to the sandstone cliffs, and I can readily understand that it is of some importance to keep a part of the mountain-side open for visitors and sightseers, but, in any case, our first duty is to protect the sources of the water supply.

I have shown, on the accompanying sketch-plan, a red line, following as nearly as possible the watershed towards the Bower Creek and the Hobart Rivulet; this line indicates the place where a barbed-wire fence should be run to prevent men and beasts from entering the vicinity of "The Springs."

The road should be deviated from its present position somewhere north from "The Stockade," but should not be allowed to run much farther towards the west, as shown, and should,

if it is at all possible to get the necessary gradient, be led in zig-zag to the head of Dunn's Creek, where stables and all necessary sanitary arrangements might be established without any danger to the Hobart water supply.

The cottage and the other sheds at "The Springs" should be removed, and the caretaker's cottage might be re-erected, for instance, at the place, as shown on the sketch, just below the old road and under the cliffs. A path from here could take visitors up on the old road under the cliffs, which could be used as a promenade, and could be lined with benches and tables. Further, steps hewn out in the sandstone cliffs would lead up on top of the cliffs, where a place say, 100 ft. by 200 ft., might be fenced in, and an open pavilion erected, which would enable visitors to enjoy the fine view obtainable from that position. It would, of course, be one of the caretaker's duties to keep the enclosure clean.

I have proposed the use of Dunn's Creek in preference to the Sandy Bay Rivulet, because the last-named watercourse has been carried round in close proximity to the service reservoirs; and, if drainage liquids were sent down this creek, there would always be the probability of a part of it filtering into the reservoir.

I believe there are some settlers on the lower part of Dunn's Creek who obtain water from it at present. In case the sanitary arrangements proposed herein are carried out, it will be necessary to compensate these people, just as well as the watering trough on the Huon Road, where the creek crosses it, will have to be supplied with water by means of a small pipe from the Fern Tree Bower, or the nearest place practicable.

I beg to return, enclosed, all papers and plans in connection herewith.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

K. L. RAHBEEK, *M. Dan. Assoc. C.E.*

The Honourable the Minister of Lands and Works, &c., Hobart.

SKETCH PLAN

SHEWING PART OF M^T WELLINGTON FROM SPRINGS HOUSE TO FERN TREE INN

Taken from M^r Goddard's Plan with Additional information obtained from the Water Works Authorities.

