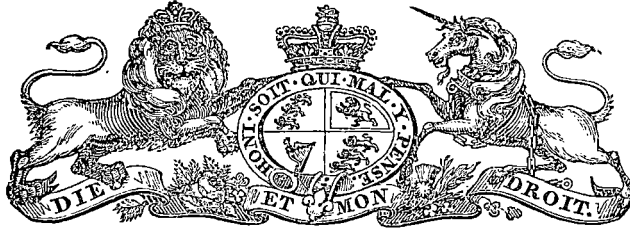


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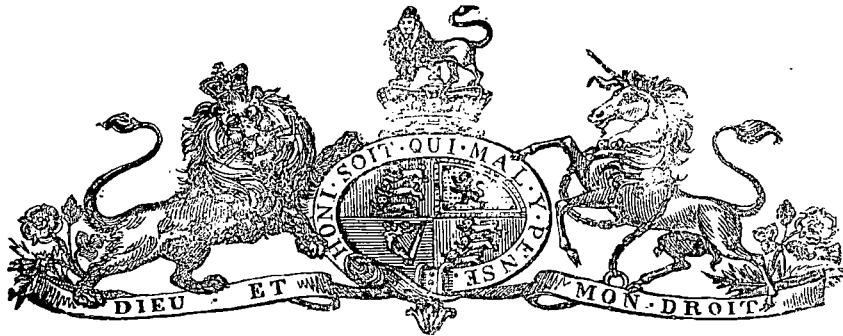
1886.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

MACQUARIE HARBOUR PINE AND OTHER
TIMBER TREES OF THE WEST COAST:

REPORT BY CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.



Crown Lands Office, Hobart, 8th July, 1886.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to submit the following Report of my trip to the West Coast of Tasmania for the purpose of ascertaining the extent of damage alleged to have been caused to the Pine by diggers located in the Pine beds of the Queen River and creeks on the eastern slope of Mount Sorell, together with general remarks upon the character of the timber and country met with *en route*.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

GEO. S. PERRIN,
Conservator of Forests.

The Hon. N. J. BROWN, Minister of Lands and Works, Hobart.

REPORT ON MACQUARIE HARBOUR PINE AND OTHER TIMBER TREES OF THE WEST COAST.

ON Friday, 4th of June, I left Waratah for the West Coast; and as difficulty was experienced in getting suitable horses, and doubts being freely expressed as to the possibility or otherwise of procuring horse feed *en route*, I decided upon adopting the old-fashioned expedient of tramping; and, with swag on back, in company with the mailman, left the bustling town of Waratah, with its clanking machinery and hum of busy voices, and at once plunged into the dense myrtle forest on the Pieman track.

Stepping out manfully over the "corduroy" at two miles from the township, the head waters of the Arthur, a swiftly flowing stream in floodtime, was crossed, and the foot of a redoubtable range, known as "The Magnet," is reached. On the summit of this range, which is of high altitude, the forest is more open in character than the myrtle forests of the lower country, and large myrtle trees of good quality are met with, and occasionally clumps of gums, a variety of *E. amygdalina*, are found. The celery-top pine also flourishes here; whilst the wealth of vegetation on this range is remarkable, and comprises nearly all the shrubs and smaller trees and ferns of Tasmania, and I have no doubt many unknown elsewhere except in elevated regions similar to these.

It is easily seen that the quality of the myrtle timber as grown on these semi-alpine regions is superior to that grown on the Coast, and as this timber is largely in use at the Bischoff and other mines, its usefulness is beyond doubt.

The celery-top pine is also in demand at the Bischoff Mine in the construction of the revolving tables used for the saving of the slime tin. The smooth surface of this remarkable wood, together with its singular freedom from shrinkage, is the subject of panegyric from visitors as well as from those using it at the mine.

A piece of this timber forming a portion of the first water-wheel erected at the mine eleven years ago, and under water all that time, was given to me, and is now in the office. The wood is as firm in texture, and as free from rot or decay, as it was when first put in the wheel, thus undoubtedly proving its value as a water-resisting wood.

At 11 miles from Waratah the "Whyte" River is crossed, and after passing through a gloomy forest of myrtle, and three miles further on, a Government shelter-hut, known as the "13-mile," is reached, and the long weary stretch of "corduroy" road ends, very much to the satisfaction of the footsore pedestrian. The forest here abruptly changes its character as the traveller emerges suddenly from the gloomy recesses of the dark and dismal myrtle forest into comparatively lighter timbered country, consisting chiefly of peppermint and stringy-bark, and the smaller species of scrub. The fall of the country is now into the various tributaries of the Pieman, of which the Whyte is the first stream met with. Five miles further on from the "13-mile" the first general camping-place from Waratah is reached, and known as the "18-mile;" here the country changes into open rolling downs covered with button-grass, with clumps of small useless gums and small melaleuca scrub, with a few belts of timber of fair size but of little forestal value interspersed here and there. This sort of country now continues for some miles, until the high spurs overshadowing the Pieman on both banks are reached, clothed with vegetation and densely timbered, when the button-grass plains, locally known as "Long" and "Brown's" Plains, are left behind.

The timbered country runs back from the Pieman for varying distances of from 5 to 14 miles on either bank, and comprises blackwood of fine quality, Huon, or, as it is here called, Macquarie pine, red and white myrtle of splendid quality, and the usual smaller timber incidental to the forests of Tasmania. In past years a large number of pine trees have been removed from the banks of this noble river, hence its scarcity in the immediate proximity to water, but back from the river bank a mile or two considerable numbers of good trees are still standing.

Three miles up the Donaldson River, a tributary of the Pieman, and about six miles from Corinna, I am told a fine bed of pine exists,—but this requires confirmation,—whilst considerable “beds” of pine are known to be situated some twenty miles up the river from Corinna above some formidable rapids, and lying at the back of the Heemskirk range, and from eight to ten miles from it, and not a great distance from the foot of Mount Zeehan.

Crossing the river at Corinna in a boat, this fine stream is seen to great advantage, its dark waters (hemmed in on both sides by high mountain ridges covered with timber) ever flowing with easy motion towards the sea, whilst from many gorges mountain torrents leap from fall to fall among the craggy rocks, mingling at length with the somewhat sluggish stream below.

After leaving Corinna, with its one hotel and post office on either bank of the river, the way lies up a steep mountain path through a forest of some of the finest myrtle trees in Tasmania, and of surprisingly good quality, if one may judge by the fallen trees cut by the Government party when forming the track.

A notable feature of this forest is the general growth of young pine trees (*Dacrydium Franklinii*) which are springing up in large numbers wherever the old trees have been removed. Some fine peppermint gums are found here, of excellent quality and of large size. In consequence of the pine flourishing here, and the land being unsuitable for agriculture, except in very small patches, large timber reservations should be declared at various points on both banks of this large and important stream; and I anticipate that at no very remote date forest operations on a large scale will be undertaken by the Government of Tasmania on this river, and the still more important Gordon River district as well, and that these two places will, in the future, play a very important part in the revenues of the Colony should a proper system of forest conservancy be encouraged on this coast, as it is the home of the pine, and the land being poor in quality, is only fit for timber growing. On leaving the Pieman, the road winds through the forest for 11 miles, when open button-grass plains, bounded by belts of forest land and melaleuca scrub, are seen. A few miles further on, and the first view of the ocean is obtained, and the belt of timber skirting both banks of the Tasman River appears in sight, just 13 miles from Heemskirk.

The road now skirts the sea shore all the way to Heemskirk at varying distances of half a mile to a mile and a half, passing over heathy swampy ground of a peaty nature, and undulating in character. The track is formed for miles by the peat and vegetable soil being cut out and removed bodily down to beautiful white quartz gravel which seems to underlie the whole country, thus forming a wide trench sometimes four feet in depth, with drains conducting the water to lower levels on the swampy ground, and the whole forming a most agreeable footway to Heemskirk.

At the back of the Heemskirk Range the forest again “makes,” and consists of pine (*Dacrydium*), myrtle, eucalypts, and, to the south of Mounts Zeehan and Dundas, King William pine (*Arthrotaxis cupressoides*) is found on the ridges, together with melaleuca scrub of large size. Extensive forests extend from Heemskirk Range to the foot of the Mount Lyell Range as far as the King River, and over all the streams emptying into the Pieman from the northern slopes of Zeehan and Dundas, also those of the southern slopes into the Big and Little Henty Rivers, and reaching to the foot of the range bordering the table-land of the interior, situated some 30 miles back from the sea, and known as the Eldon Range. The growth of the Huon or Macquarie pine is limited to low swampy flats bordering the streams or lower portions of the numerous valleys which are subject to inundation by floods. The King William pine, on the other hand, always prefers elevated lands, and is uniformly found on the high spurs or leading ranges of the tiers situated at the foot of the leading chain of mountains. It is an exceedingly handsome tree, of about 40 feet in height, with a girth of about 2 feet, rarely reaching 3 feet. The wood is valuable, soft in working, elastic, of extreme lightness and durability, being quite as good for general purposes as the Baltic and American timbers now in use; its fissile properties are remarkable, splitting as readily as the best stringy-bark, whilst it certainly makes the best shingles I have ever seen.

From Heemskirk, where a number of men are getting fair quantities of tin, and where defunct companies are represented by deserted engine-houses and costly “plants,” now rotting slowly under the decaying influences of time and disuse—silent, but melancholy token is given of the immense sums of money spent in the wild and in some cases reckless expenditure involved in the quest for lode tin or metalliferous reefs in this neighbourhood. The road, always good, winds among the gullies and creeks wherein are now employed the tin miners, until the Montagu mine and post office are reached, and, a mile and a half beyond, Trial Harbour appears in sight. From this place to Macquarie Harbour, a distance of 24 miles, the road lies chiefly along the sea beach, which is of a horse-shoe form, at the north end of which is the Township of Reminé, or Trial Harbour; whilst its southern extremity is terminated in the peninsula forming the entrance to Macquarie Harbour, celebrated in story as “Hell’s Gate;” two rivers have, however, to be crossed, the Big and Little Henty; the former by means of a ferry-boat with a ferryman in attendance, and the latter by a boat secured to a wire stretched across the river. The beach is firm and hard to travel over, and the rollers of the Pacific present a fine sight as they thunder on the shore, sending clouds of spray and mist high into the air. On a fine day the scene is picturesque. To the north, the Heemskirk Range stands boldly up almost from the sea; Mount Agnew at its southern end rears its lofty summit to the sky; Mounts Zeehan and Dundas, a few miles in the background, stand isolated and abrupt in their

precipitous heights, surrounded by a perfect sea of dark green, represented by the myrtle and pine forest before mentioned; and again to the eastward the lofty chain of mountains beginning with Mount Lyell and ending with Mount Sorell; the sister mounts, Owen, Huxley, and Jukes, with Darwin a little in the background, closely connected one with the other, and, about 25 miles inland, form prominent and pleasing features in the eastern landscape.

All these mountains are of a considerable height, and, when snow-capped, stand out boldly in all their grand proportions.

It is in the gullies, valleys, and flats of these mountains that the gold-digger is at work; and here, also, are found the chief beds of pine on this portion of the West Coast.

Thirteen miles from the Big Henty ferry "Old Strahan" is reached; but the few buildings are mostly deserted, one family and the local constable being the sole representatives of the townsfolk, the rest having emigrated *en masse* to Long Bay, which is reached in two miles by water and six by land. Here is seen the new town of Strahan, luxuriating in two hotels, a store, a couple of small jetties, and two or three private houses.

The extreme beauty of Macquarie Harbour is best seen from the heathy upland overlooking the town; and, when the water is undisturbed by fierce rain gusts or still fiercer hurricanes, its calm placid bosom is beautiful in the extreme; wooded points jutting out here and there, and the smooth expanse of water, some four to eight miles wide by thirty long, give one the idea of a beautiful lake rather than an inland sea.

It is, however, an extremely treacherous sheet of water. The wind rushes with great velocity down the mountain gorges, and at times lashes the sea into foam with indescribable fury, and makes it highly dangerous for small craft should they be caught in these storms.

Leaving Long Bay by the new Government road, and about a mile away, the forest is reached. The description of the timber given for the Pieman applies here with equal force, except that we here find the King William pine (*Arthrotaxis cupressoides*) growing freely. After proceeding some $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles along an excellent newly-made road, the Government road party, under Mr. Grubb, is seen energetically at work. Here we plunge into the mud, and, after a terrible seven hours' battle achieving just as many miles, the Government hut and *terra firma* are reached, the latter in the shape of a good gravel road made some two years ago. The timber passed through consisted of the usual myrtle forest, with a few eucalypts sparsely distributed, and the customary scrub, including the horizontal. About six miles from Strahan a thick scrub of melaleuca, horizontal, and King William pine, the latter now seen for the first time, was passed through, some fine trees being noted. The road, which runs parallel with the King River, at a distance of some three or four miles from it, will be of great use in the future in getting pine from the gullies or valleys (inaccessible from the river side) lying between the road and the river, opening up new pine country on the opposite side of the road, when the timber can be either hauled in by teams right into Strahan, or along cross roads in suitable places, to be thrown into the river and floated down, and thus opening up a large extent of pine country. At the Government hut the road follows round a steep mountain range for about 10 miles, with an easy grade and down hill all the way until the Queen crossing is reached, and thence over a very bad piece of road to the King River Company's claim, situated a mile and a half from the crossing. From this claim a track is now being cut to the Linda, some six miles further on, to Mount Lyell claims. About a mile from the Queen River the pine (*Dacrydium*) is met with in quantity, though the best trees have long since been culled out; but good trees still remain, and are found nearly the whole length of the river to its source near the foot of Mount Lyell. Pine is also found along the bed of the Princess Creek, a tributary of the Queen, whilst a fine bed exists in Lynch's Creek, some two miles away from the King River claims. On the ridges the King William pine is fairly abundant. A few gums are met with, but of no size and poor in quality. Myrtle and pine form the chief wooded features of these forests.

Following the Queen up stream for about four miles, melaleuca and pine, with myrtle on the spurs and ridges, cover the country; and on a leading spur of Mount Lyell a splendid young forest is growing, and will probably be found of great use in the mining operations now going on in the neighbourhood.

There is an absence of the usual undergrowth in this forest, and, as a consequence, the trees are straighter grown, of better quality, and more even in size than other forests on the West Coast; thus proving, in a natural way, the good effects which would result generally from the thinning out of the dense growth of trees of lesser value, and in giving the remainder more light and greater scope to grow into mature trees.

Still ascending the spur, and passing through a jungle of dead ti-tree and young gums (*E. Gunnii*), burnt and scorched by the fires of the diggers, the top of the leading spur of Mount Lyell is reached, which here assumes a horseshoe form, and connects with Mount Owen, and bare open country is seen for miles, with the rugged peaks of Owen, Huxley, Jukes, and Darwin east and south-east, whilst southward a few miles Mount Sorell looms large and bulky, and terminates this mountain range. The tops of all these mountains are bare rocky eminences, of fantastic form, and rugged in the extreme.

To the west, the sea, the mouths of the two Henty rivers, and the peaceful waters of Macquarie Harbour, in strong contrast to the turbulent breakers of the Pacific, half veiled in mist and gloom. East and north-east the Eldon range, sending its tributary streams into the King Valley, and on the higher table-land a beautiful lake (Lake Beatrice) glitters in the sun;—"a veritable thing of beauty." South-east the

"Frenchman's Cap," white with virgin snow, and southerly Mount Sorell's snow-flecked peak, with the Craycroft Range dimly seen on the distant horizon in the direction of the Gordon River, formed a picture of infinite beauty in the noonday sun.

From here the course of the Linda can be readily traced to its junction with the King, and the Linda Valley, opening out from the amphitheatre formed by the spur above mentioned connecting with Mount Owen, whilst on the opposite side another spur or portion of Mount Lyell, of semicircular form, approaches Mount Owen and shuts in the Linda Valley, leaving only a narrow gorge or opening between the two mounts, through which the Linda escapes, when the valley again opens out along its course, and around the foot of Mount Owen, and finally becomes merged in the valley of the King. Park-like plains, button-grass, with patches of burnt scrub, can be seen for miles, the Linda taking its rise from several creeks immediately under Mount Lyell on its eastern side, thence trending south-easterly to the King, passes close under Mount Owen through the gorge previously mentioned, when the various creeks coming in from the foothills of the Eldon Range assist in swelling its volume ere it joins and is lost in the waters of the King.

Dense timber belts margin these plains, consisting of myrtle, pine, and melaleuca, whilst a very fine bed of pine is said to occupy the flats immediately around the junction of the two streams.

I have no doubt but that large quantities of King William pine, and probably other allied species of *Artrotaxis*, will be found on the slopes and spurs of the Eldon Range.

It is along this valley that the track marked out by Mr. T. Moore, from Hamilton *via* Mount Arrow-smith, runs, and a good cart road terminates at the latter place, leaving a length of road of about 35 miles yet to be formed, half of which distance would be through the long valley above described, and crossing the King not far from its junction with the Linda. The expenditure needful for the completion of this road need not be very great, as nearly half the distance would be through open plains or lightly-timbered country.

At the foot of Mount Lyell several parties of diggers are hard at work extracting the precious metal from the hillside, likewise from the bed of alluvial deposit formed by the several creeks or mountain torrents which here tumble down from the heights above. Zeplin and party, directly under Mount Lyell, are working and "sluicing" out a huge face in the side of the mountain, about 150 feet long by 80 in height—a regular quarry in fact,—and good gold, though fine in quality, is obtained all through the wash, like the tin at Mount Bischoff. The owners speak in glowing terms of their prospects. In the creek below another party (North, Fay, and Co.) have done an immense amount of "dead" work, having spent 12 months in tapping one of the creeks above referred to, and constructing a race of some three miles in length, under great difficulties, in order to bring the water into their claim for sluicing purposes, and there is every probability of their pluck and energy being substantially rewarded. One or two other parties are here doing well, that is if "contentment" is a sign of well-doing. On the Queen side of the mount several parties are prospecting, and all getting gold in varying quantities.

The Mount Lyell Co., on the spur connecting Lyell with Owen, have their workings situated high above the others, and consequently frequently run short of water for sluicing purposes; a great deal of quarry work has been done, the first owners being tyros in the art of mining. The gold obtained here is very fine, indeed some of it is designated "gold paint" by the men, on account of its extreme fineness, sticking to the dish, water having little or no effect upon it. Immense masses of iron are found on this claim. The "bottom" on which the gold rests is composed of this iron decomposed forming a stiff mineral clay-like substance, through which veins containing large quantities of virgin copper extend. (The day following my visit, the reef (quartz) was struck, and I have since been informed good specimens have been secured. A rush at once was made for the ground and a large number of claims were pegged out immediately afterwards.) Water being scarce at such an altitude, there is no doubt but that sluicing operations must be carried on at lower levels, and the "stuff" shot down to the water to be more profitably dealt with than at present.

The timber necessary for the working of these mines is obtainable close at hand, and consists of a fine myrtle forest of good quality, and should the workings extend to the eastward or north-east slope of Mt. Lyell, timber is there in abundance, myrtle chiefly, so that no interference with the pine beds of the Linda or Upper King may be apprehended.

It is only in the event of the adventurous digger finding his way into and invading the Collingwood Valley during the ensuing summer that danger to the pine existing in these low lands may be feared, and in such case some sort of supervision may be rendered necessary to prevent damage. In visiting the Linda I had occasion to traverse the Queen River for a distance of nearly ten miles, over an ordinary prospecting track, and therefore had ample opportunity of seeing the damage wrought by diggers in their search for gold. So far as damage to pine was concerned there is not much to complain of. A few trees have here and there been cut and burnt out of the way, but nothing to form the basis of a serious complaint; fortunately the myrtle timber is more suitable for firewood, and hence is used in preference to the pine. During the summer months the diggers are in the habit of burning off large tracts of country in order to clear it of scrub, and to enable them to see the country and travel through it.

From the fact of the Huon pine growing only on the wet river-flats and swamps, such fires rarely damage this timber; but the converse of this is the case in regard to the King William pine, whose habitat is chiefly on the ridges and spurs covered with dense *melaleuca* scrub, and as these ridges are invariably chosen by the prospector in making his tracks, firing is consequently resorted to indiscriminately, and much damage may be done to valuable timber.

That the King William pine is a useful tree proof is abundantly forthcoming in the fact that the manager of the King River Co. is putting up some fine substantial huts for the use of the men, and a nice two-roomed cottage for his own use is now in course of erection. Mr. Marsh speaks in the highest terms of its utility and quality, and as I saw the building in question I am enabled to endorse fully the eulogiums passed upon the timber by the manager and also by the men using it, and I have secured a piece which is now in the office.

The King River Co. have a most extensive property here, and an enormous amount of dead-work has been got through by the energetic manager, Mr. Marsh, nearly 200 yards of drives along a well defined reef having been put in, and a large body of excellent stone bared ready for stoping out as soon as the necessary "plant" for crushing it arrives on the ground, and the state of the roads will permit of the arrival of machinery.

Leaving the King River Co.'s claim on the return from the Linda, the road for a mile and a half to the Queen crossing is a perfect quagmire, and here the pine flourishes, numerous fine young trees growing vigorously. In years past a large number of good trees have been removed from this locality and dragged into the bed of the river, there to await the floods to be carried by them to the King, and flooded down that river to Macquarie Harbour for shipment. Ascending the Government road,—which is excavated from the mountain side or range flanking one side of the large valley along which the accumulated waters of the Queen and other tributaries flow noisily over numerous rapids to the King,—it winds its tortuous way for ten miles with an easy grade, and, though narrow, is firm under foot; but as a false step of either man or horse might send one headlong from the precipitous height a thousand feet or more into the valley below, care is necessary in threading the labyrinthine windings of this mountain road, whilst the view of the valley formed by the Queen River at its junction with Lynch's Creek, the Princess, and other streams, is very fine. This valley is densely timbered, and contains a fine bed of pine.

On reaching the Government Hut, which is situated 15 miles from Macquarie Harbour, a track, perceptible only to the eagle eye of the daring prospector, turns sharply to the left, and leading through a perfect tangle of vegetation as the pioneer plunges headlong down a steep declivity, sun, and even daylight itself, almost hidden from sight; now passing over an extempore bridge of myrtle and pine trunks, and sliding down steep moss-covered, slippery rocks into water up to the waist, and again jumping from boulder to boulder, saluted at every step with showers of water from innumerable fern fronds hanging overhead, the weary and wet wayfarer emerges at length into an open flat or clearing, occupied by the store and boarding-house, known to all diggers in that region as "The Landing," and here a fine sight meets the eye. The King here forms an elbow, and the swiftly-rushing water striking the solid rock, which is pinched in at this point, the black water is hurled over a fall of about 15 feet, and boiling and churning into eddies, dashes furiously onward with a roar like thunder as it rushes from under the sheltering precipitous heights of Huxley and Jukes, forming rapids for about half a mile below the "Landing," whilst on either bank massive frowning hills environ the river, timbered from base to summit, and towering aloft from the water to a height of from 800 to 1000 feet, whilst below the river dashes onwards through this dismal region, causing an appearance of gloom not easily describable.

It is here that the boats laden with goods from Macquarie Harbour land their stores, and here a store and accommodation house is built, diggers arriving daily and replenishing their scanty larder.

Crossing the river amidst the whirl of rapids in a "dug-out" canoe of Huon pine, the digger, with from 60 lbs. to 80 lbs. strapped to his back, has to scale the terrible ridge on the opposite side, which rises abruptly and almost perpendicularly from the bed of the King to a height of nearly a thousand feet, and so steep is the ascent that on reaching the top a stone might be thrown into the river near the "Landing."

This ridge forms the leading spur of Mount Sorell, from the top of which a fine view is obtainable. To the south and south-west moderately flat country is seen until the Craycroft range is met with. There is no doubt but that extensive pine-beds will be found around the Craycroft range to the Gordon River, and it is this country which will ultimately be found of great value for State forest purposes.

From Mount Sorell the fall of the country is towards the Gordon, and hence facilities will doubtless be found in getting the pine into that river for shipment.

Looking north and north-west from Mount Sorell a wild and rugged mountainous country meets the eye on every side, and as this is apparently the auriferous and metalliferous region of the West Coast, no doubt discoveries of considerable value may be expected at any time, as the prospecting hitherto done in many instances has been performed by those possessing but little practical knowledge of mining, and the few "pot-holes" scattered about the country can scarcely be considered as conclusive evidence of the non-existence of gold or other valuable metals.

The character of the timber in these mountain valleys is similar to that already described, and as we are now on the threshold of new and comparatively unexplored country, a brief description of the route may not be uninteresting. After rising about a thousand feet from the King, the spur is followed for about three miles on an ascending grade, which eventually leads to the highest point or lofty peak of Mount Sorell; the path then abruptly descends the spur into a wild mountain valley on its eastern side, densely timbered; the track being only a prospector's rough path, the traveller has some difficulty in getting along, and after considerable scrambling, "Flannigan's Prospecting Claim" is reached, and we find ourselves on the "New Rush."

A bed of very old pine is here found, and on the hillside some fine dead trees are still standing—leafless skeletons—but sound to the core; most of the living trees have their tops broken off, and have a forlorn, battered appearance, illustrating the power of the wind even in these sheltered valleys. Pushing on to the creek, fallen pine is seen on all sides, half buried in mud and stones by former floods; over these, again, other trees have fallen, and from the latter spring young vigorous pine trees, with a girth of 9 inches to 14 inches, growing at right angles to the parent trunk. In some places a perfect net-work of pine is met with, and as many as four prostrate trunks of this tree lie one upon the other; but in all cases, whether buried in mud and stones, or standing leafless and dry on the hillsides, the trees are perfectly sound in quality. The former trees trouble the miner most, as when “paddocking” is going on these logs have to be cut, burnt, or otherwise got rid of; of course when the standing tree is encountered in the course of gold-seeking it has to go, and is then used up in various ways, or rolled on one side, and if still in the way, is perhaps burnt. The young pines suffer as well as the old trees; as the whole of the ground in the paddock is turned over, nothing escapes the digger’s destructive proclivities.

The creek is here about 150 yards wide, and at present only a narrow line of workings extend along its centre; and as only some dozen paddocks of a few yards square have so far been worked, the damage done is not very alarming.

Several parties are at work and all getting gold, and some very fair quantities. A few pounds weight have been obtained and sent away, and one claim (Hall’s), now in dispute, is undeniably rich in the precious metal, and some considerable excitement has been caused by the finds here.

This creek, called by the diggers after its discoverer, “Flannigan’s Creek,” is a tributary of a large creek coming in from the foot of Mount Darwin, on the east side of a steep range forming the opposite side of the gorge to the Sorrell spur, and the latter creek runs into the King some two or three miles above the landing. Both these creeks contain a large quantity of pine, but the difficulty will be to get it out; the creeks being steep, with numerous small falls and quick get-away for the water, which would, therefore, never bank up sufficiently to allow the flood waters to carry the pine to the main creek, and from thence to the King.

About 40 men are here engaged in mining operations in these and neighbouring creeks; and on a careful examination I found the damage done to the pine much less serious than anticipated. A few good trees have certainly been cut and utilized in various ways, but no wanton damage has been done, and, indeed, all the miners to whom I spoke in reference to the subject expressed their intention to do as little damage as possible, and are to be complimented for their patriotic expressions regarding the pine; none know better than these men the value to their class of the pine being conserved and looked after in the event of its being re-opened to the public, as the utilization of the pine means to the digger regular and constant water communication, and, what is of much more consequence, cheap supplies; hence the fear of wanton and extensive damage being done to the pine by the digger and *bonâ fide* prospector may, in a great measure, be laid aside.

The few diggers’ camps in these creeks form the vanguard of civilisation, and probably no one has as yet penetrated the comparatively unknown country at the back of Mount Darwin.

The pine forests of the Pieman River, and more particularly those of the Gordon, should ever be jealously guarded and kept intact as the property of the State. Their value will year by year increase, and, under a proper system of forestry, may be made to yield a large revenue to the Colony in years to come; and I venture to predict that the pine forests of the Gordon will be found among the most valuable State property the Colony possesses, and trust that large reservations will be made on this extensive and important river as soon as the country is inspected and reported on.

It will be seen by the foregoing report, that the eucalypts of the Colony form but a very small proportion of the forests of the West Coast, being few in number, and decidedly inferior in quality of timber to that grown in other parts of Tasmania.

After completing an inspection of Flannigan’s Creek, or the “New Rush,” and the creeks around it, a start was made for the return journey on Wednesday, 23rd of June, and Waratah was reached on the following Wednesday, June 30th, thus accomplishing a journey of nearly 300 miles on foot. Hobart was reached on July 3rd, the whole journey occupying five weeks.