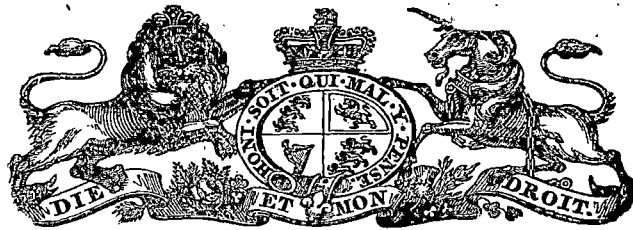


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PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

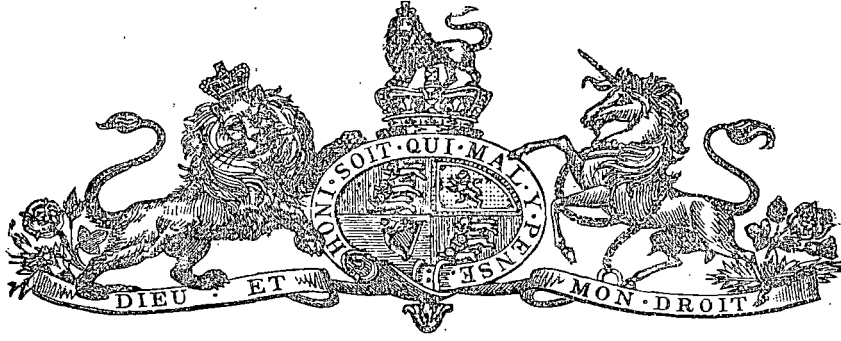
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QUALITY OF LAND AND TIMBER RESOURCES,  
RUSSELL'S FALLS RIVER :

REPORT OF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS.

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



*Lands and Works Office, 10th June, 1889.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to forward herewith my Report upon the timber resources and the quality of the land now being taken up by selectors on the Russell's Falls River, for your consideration and approval.

I left New Town on the 3rd instant by the 5.15 P.M. train for Glenora, at which place I arrived in due course, and drove to Mr. E. Shoobridge's at Bushy Park, whose guest I was for the night.

The following morning, at 7.30 A.M., Mr. W. E. Shoobridge and myself started on horseback for Mr. Marriott's selection, distant about 17 miles, where we arrived at 11.30 A.M. After a light and hurried lunch an attempt was made to ascend Marriott's Look-out, but time would not allow our ascending more than about 2800 feet, where we had a fairly good look at the surrounding country, arriving back to camp in good time before darkness set in, where preparations were made to camp out for the night, and arrangements for next day's proceedings discussed.

6 A.M. the following morning found the camp all astir. At 7.30 A.M. Mr. Marriott, Mr. W. E. Shoobridge, and myself started for a walk through the selected land, taking the track up the river, and arrived at an old camping place at 12.30 P.M., a distance of 5½ miles. After dinner struck a course due south over a rough, scrubby ridge, and after struggling three-quarters of a mile, which took us an hour, a track known as MacPartland's was struck, and the return journey made for the camp, which was reached at dusk. The day's journey was, in all, about 11 miles, which took us many hours to cover. The following day I returned to Hobart, calling at New Norfolk.

The selected land, commencing with Mr. R. Marriott's selection of 50 acres, is fairly good till a small creek, known as Proctor's, was crossed; from this point the really good land began, and continued to the furthest point of our journey, consisting of a rich dark loam, from 6 inches to 2 feet 6 inches deep, on a rich friable clay sub-soil. The whole of the area passed through was, with few exceptions, fairly dry. But the country, although flat, has sufficient fall to thoroughly drain the whole of what I saw; and for growing root crops, orchards, or grass for dairy purposes and fattening stock, this new country will be very hard to surpass. From all the information I could gain, the climate is very good, snow rarely known, and with a sufficient rainfall.

Notwithstanding the undoubted value of a large area of land on this river, I look on the timber as the most valuable in the first instance. The whole of the country inspected, and as far as the eye could reach from an altitude of 2000 feet on Marriott's Look-out, was one never-ending forest of magnificent white gum, stringy-bark, blackwood, myrtle, sassafras, and wattle. The blackwood alone would constitute it a valuable one, and it will be a standing reproach to the Colony if some steps are not taken to prevent its ruthless destruction, signs of which have already begun. Some endeavour should be made to induce those who have already selected, and those who, I feel sure, will follow in large numbers, to send this timber to market; for not only will large quantities be required for our own railways, but any surplus that may remain there are the outside markets of the world, who are looking about them for railway material, and require an unlimited supply.

I would suggest to the Minister, for his earnest consideration, that tracks should be cut through this land as early as possible, so that selectors can see the country outside of those already selected with some amount of comfort, and in a reasonable time, for in its present condition it is anything but an easy matter to get along at all; and that one track should be cut that will ultimately be the main road to Glenora, or the nearest point to the railway when it should be extended beyond that point.

To construct a macadamised road through this district will be very costly on account of the scarcity of the material; and as the present road, from the turn-off on the Ellendale Road, requires a good deal to be made, and some that is made being of a dangerous character (land-slips having already taken place), and would have to be widened, as there is only room enough for one vehicle to pass along at a time, I would suggest to the Minister that a line of road should be laid out by

some competent person from the turn-off on the Ellendale Road right through this district, and that such road should be a permanent one. To assist the selectors to send their timber to market, I would strongly advise that a substantial tramway be made instead of a macadamised road, for not only will the selectors benefit by such a course, but the Crown lands, of which there are thousands of acres outside of them, will still be left with an immense quantity of timber of equal value available for market.

As this is likely to be a very important district, I would suggest that the Minister withdraw from selection all that 300 acres or thereabouts bounded on the north by the Falls River, on the west by the said river and Robert Marriott's selection of 50½ acres, on the south by Crown lands, and on the east by selectors Elias and M. Marriott, as a town reserve.

The Russell's Falls River is a very pretty one, with many turns. In no case could a straight view be got of any length, the ripples in many cases being very beautiful. It is fed on both sides by several little creeks, those on the north being the strongest. A heavy flood had been in the river shortly before my visit, and had overflowed its banks in one or two places, but not to any great extent. This was caused by the amount of timber in the bed of the river. In some places it was dammed right across.

The principal part of the scrubbing the selector will have to deal with will be the old-man ferns, which average about nine feet high, and there are literally thousands of acres of them. These ferns (and the dead trees, of which there are a great number) will constitute the bulk of the undergrowth. I only once saw the dreaded horizontal, and at furthest point of our journey the celery-top pine began; and I was informed by Mr. Marriott that some few miles further on to the south-west it was plentiful and of good size.

As I expected to see some fish in this river I kept a good look-out every time we came on its banks, and was rewarded by seeing a large number of brown trout from 12 to 14 inches long, fat and lazy, in a shallow piece of back water on Roll's selection. This will be good news to the disciples of Isaak Walton, for there can be no doubt the river, to use strong language, must be full of them.

We were very fortunate in the weather, having had two very fine days, and were camped out two nights; consequently, we saw the country under very fair circumstances to enable us to judge of its value.

I have the honor to be,  
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

WILLIAM T. H. BROWN, *Conservator of Forests.*

*The Hon. A. T. PILLINGER, Esq.,  
Minister of Lands and Works.*