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SESSION II.

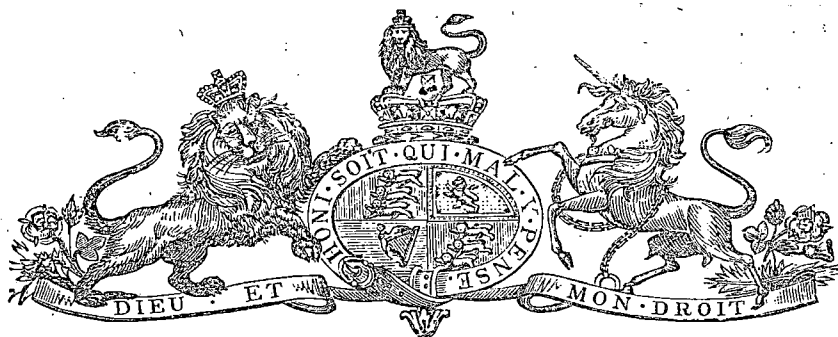
PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

ROUTE TO THE WEST COAST:

Report of Mr. Surveyor Frodsham upon the Country between the
Vicinity of Mount Humboldt and the Track to the West of Mount
Arrowsmith *viâ* Valley of Rasselas.

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

Cost of printing—£2·8s.



Stone Buildings, Hobart, 22nd June, 1896.

SIR,

In accordance with your instructions, I have made a careful examination of the country between the vicinity of Mount Humboldt and the track to the west of Mount Arrowsmith, and have the honor to forward the following Report and accompanying sketch plan.

General Description of Route followed.

Commencing in the dividing range between the Russell's Falls and Florentine Valleys on the Public Works track, at a distance of 8 miles 60 chains from end of main road in Russell's Falls, and at a height of 1765 feet above Glenora railway station and 1100 feet above end of main road, the track will bear west and north west round a leading spur and again west to the Florentine River, a distance of 2 miles 50 chains, with a fall of 650 feet to the river from starting-point. Crossing the Florentine, the route continues westerly for a short distance and then south west round steep spur for a distance of 70 chains to top of spur 350 feet above the Florentine. This will be a grade of 1 in 10 for 60 chains, but this can be very much improved by keeping lower down the spur and coming round on to the top with a longer sweep.

From this spur the track turns north west and west along open button-grass ridges, across a small creek which is a branch of the Florentine, and then round dividing spur, across low saddle, on to Gordon Plains, and thence along those open button-grass plains north-westerly to the Gordon River, crossing the river through a small patch of heavy timber, and thence about north-westerly along open button-grass country, which is fairly level, and crossing numerous creeks to a point about west of Wyld's Craig, and then north-westerly to a large branch of the Gordon not shown on existing charts, a distance of $25\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the starting point. This branch of the Gordon drains a considerable area to the west of Denison Range, and seems to divide, from a prospecting point of view, the barren country (that is, the high quartz and conglomerate ranges) from the seeming auriferous country of slate, serpentine, and quartz. In my plan I have only shown the route actually traversed, but, from my knowledge of the country, extending over the past eighteen years, I believe that between the Frenchman and Prince of Wales Range on the north and Mount Wedge on the south the country is well worthy of the attention of prospectors. The southern portion can be easily reached by way of Russell's Falls, and the northern part by way of the Linda Track. West of Mount Arrowsmith a large portion of it seems to be open button-grass, and therefore easy of access in the summer months. Leaving this branch of the Gordon, the track crosses over the lowest part of the divide between this stream and the branch of the Denison River in a north-westerly, and then westerly and south-westerly direction. When travelling along this range looking for the best position for a road, I came across slate cliffs from 100 to 150 feet high, with quartz leaders containing iron pyrites. This portion of the route will be the heaviest and most expensive part, having an ascending grade of 1 in 10 for about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and a descending one round steep spurs of 1 in 15 for 3 miles. After crossing the small branch of the Denison the route follows near stream over several small spurs to main stream of Denison River, and thence north-westerly crossing several high spurs and branches of Denison River, through dense cutting-grass, tea-tree, bauera, horizontal and other scrub, to a point on Prince of Wales Range marked A. The route for line of road would be as shown on plan along the principal branch of the Denison River.

From the point marked A on plan the course I intended to have adopted was to have followed along Prince of Wales Range across dividing range, between Denison and Lodden River, along Lodden Hills to Linda Track; but as my provisions were almost exhausted—in fact, we had been living upon less than half ration for three weeks previously—I had to abandon the marking and measuring of the track, and break across country to the nearest open country to get something to eat in the shape of badgers, estimating the distance and taking what observations it was possible *en route*. This proved to be over Prince of Wales Range to the open button-grass country near Calder's Pass, and thence along Lodden Plains to Linda Track. You will note from my plan that the Prince of Wales Range is out of position as shewn on existing charts, being by my observations some miles more to the north, and also that one branch of Lodden River rises near the east of Frenchman's Cap Range.

and not as shewn on charts. During the short time I was camped on branch of Gordon I ascended the high points in the vicinity to examine the country, and I adopted the route followed by me along Denison River to avoid the very high spurs and deep gullies that run out west from the King William Range. A very fair line of road can be obtained along the route followed up to the point marked A on the plan, but whether a good line can be secured beyond, along route indicated by me, a decided opinion cannot be given without further exploration, but I am perfectly certain, from observations obtained, that it will be a heavy and expensive work, and when the numerous hills and gullies come to be graded round, it will be very little, if any, shorter than the existing route *viâ* Ouse and Marlborough.

Distances.

Length from starting-point to connection with track west of Arrowsmith.....	53 miles.
Distance from Hobart <i>viâ</i> Russell's Falls, Florentine, Gordon and Denison Rivers	118 miles.
NOTE.—Out of this distance 106 miles have been actually measured and only 12 miles estimated.	
Distance from Hobart <i>viâ</i> Ouse, Marlborough, and Linda Track, from actual measurement	124 miles.

Suitability for Road-making along Route.—Nature of Materials, &c.

With the exception of about three miles crossing the divide between Gordon and Denison Rivers, abundance of first-class material will be found for road-making in close proximity to the route, and a very good road can be made through the open button-grass country by stripping the surface on to the quartz gravel. I have tried many places along the route through the open country and find the average stripping to be from 18 inches to 2 feet in depth.

Information with respect to Streams and Rivers crossed.

Florentine River.—This river is a sluggish stream with very little fall, 125 links wide, and from 10 to 12 feet deep after heavy rain. The west bank is a good high one, but the water at flood time flows over the east bank for about two chains. This would necessitate open piling for that distance from bridge itself.

Gordon River.—A fast rapid flowing stream, 160 links wide, with considerable fall, and from 12 to 14 feet deep at flood time. The position at which I crossed is the best that can be obtained in the locality for a site for bridge. It has a good dry bank on the east side, but overflows on the west bank for about 2 chains, which would again necessitate open piling for that distance. This river is a very difficult one to cross after heavy rain. The only crossing-place at present in flood time is a tree which fell across the river on my former visit in the summer of 1878. On my arrival on the present occasion, after about a week's rain, I found the river had risen some six feet over the tree; but after a few days' fine weather I managed to get across, and had barely time to get over all provisions when the rain set in with heavy fall of snow, and within three hours the tree was again under water to a depth of about six feet, and I believe remained so for some weeks.

Between Gordon Bend and branch of Gordon numerous small streams are crossed, which, like all in this locality, rise very rapidly after a day's heavy rain in the winter, and great care will be required in constructing a road to give plenty of waterway for the numerous small bridges and culverts required.

Branch of Gordon.—This is a stream about 100 links wide, and, like all others, floods rapidly. A good crossing for a bridge can be obtained on to a leading spur which runs down from the Divide.

The numerous branches of the Denison River are small streams from 50 to 25 links wide, and no difficulty will be found in crossing them.

The quality of the land passed through, with the exception of about 400 acres along the Denison River, a small portion of which is an alluvial flat and the balance myrtle spurs, is of the poorest description, and the quantity, especially to the west, almost unlimited; but the route will pass within a few miles of the best land in the Florentine Valley. A full report upon this valley I forwarded to you some few years ago. With respect to timber, there is a considerable quantity of King William Pine to be found in the country between the Prince of Wales and King William Ranges. Some trees measured over 50 feet in girth. Very large myrtles also predominate.

In conclusion, I may add that I have been delayed over this work longer than I expected, owing to the very severe weather experienced, the greater part of the time being heavy rain with occasional falls of snow on the adjacent hills, myself and party returning to camp almost every night wet through, and from the very heavy nature of the country met with after leaving the Gordon River.

I have, &c.

THOMAS FRODSHAM, *District Surveyor.*

The Honorable the Minister of Lands and Works.

