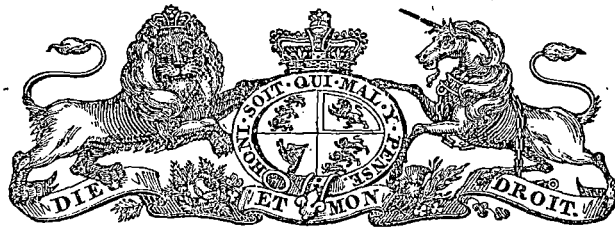


(No. 39.)



1867.

TASMANIA.

REPORT ON GOULD'S NEW COUNTRY.

Laid upon the Table by the Colonial Treasurer, and ordered by the House to be printed, 11 September, 1867.



(Copy.)

*Camp, Gould's Country, near George's Bay, 28th June, 1867.*

SIR,

AT my last interview with the Honorable the Colonial Treasurer, he requested me to keep him informed of my progress with the horse track to Ringarooma; and as I presume that the Reports were intended to be sent through the usual channel, I beg to furnish you with the particulars as far as I have gone. I am now in the 5th Mile, but should have been further advanced but for the time it took me in clearing a horse track along the surveyed line of road to the point of commencement, and which has not been commenced by the Board of Works for the Fingal District.

#### 1ST MILE.

Proceeding in the direction of Ringarooma on an average bearing of west  $14^{\circ}$  south, I attained the summit of the dividing range between the "Groom" and the "Ransom" Rivers at 50 chains from the starting point. I then descended a steep hill, my first mile terminating in a valley; character of the ground, first-rate; vegetation, large gum and fern trees, stringy bark on crown of hill where there are granite boulders, but good soil nevertheless.

#### 2ND MILE.

Crossed numerous creeks, all running into the "Groom." Crossed the latter river at 65 chains running south, and 50 links wide. Entered on west side of river a myrtle forest, which continued more or less to the end. Character of ground, the same as No. 1. The only addition to the 1st mile in vegetation being myrtle in the low ground.

#### 3RD MILE.

Continued for 20 chains in a comparatively flat country, with a splendid bed of gum trees, when I rose a steep hill of some 10 chains in length. Having reached the crown at 43 chains, I continued to the end on undulating table land, crossing one nice little stream running north into the "Groom." Character, the same as Nos. 1 and 2, if not better, and similar in vegetation.

#### 4TH MILE.

Crossed a fine little stream running into the "Groom" at 2 chains from Picket, and a second at 22 chains passing over table land of the choicest description to the 44th chain, when I commenced dipping into a gully, and at 69.50 links I crossed a fine stream 10 links wide running south, and evidently a tributary of George's River, from which point to the end the character of the land is exactly similar with every prospect of its continuance. The weather is unfavourable, but I have lost no time as yet, as we persevere with the work through all showery weather, and, as you may imagine, get drenched to the skin nearly every day.

I trust the good land may continue through to Ringarooma; but if it does I shall not complete before late in August, as the route is of necessity circuitous, on account of the number of dead trees we fall in with of from 3 to 10 feet through. Wherever practicable, I make a bridge of fern trees over logs to save the distance of going round.

I have no paper to copy my correspondence with you, all my foolscap paper being spoilt by the wet, so that I shall have to beg the favour of being allowed to copy my letters when I complete the work.

I may add that the ground is covered with the water fern so familiarly known in all rich virgin soil. As I do not know when I may have an opportunity of sending this to post, I will not close in the event of my being able to give you further information. As far as I have gone the country is all of a granite nature, and at the commencement of the 5th mile I have seen very likely quartz, but not in veins or lodes.

Sunday, the 30th.

I have nothing more to add save that we are progressing with the 5th mile, the particulars of which, with all further progress, will be duly reported to you.

I have the honor to be, &c.,

(Signed) JOHN THOMAS.

J. E. CALDER, *Esq.*, Surveyor-General, Hobart Town.

Gould's Country, 19th July, 1867.

## PROGRESS REPORT.

### 5TH MILE.

Rising a rich fern-tree hill, I attained the summit at 10 chains, containing large swamp gum and dogwood. At 20 chains caught a glimpse of Mount Victoria, bearing S. 39° W. From this point to 31·20 links I descended sharply into a fine stream 10 links wide, running southerly. Rising gradually to 40 chains, I again descended a steep hill to a fine little river, which I crossed at 61·40-77 links, being another tributary of George's River. From this point I rose sharply to the end of the mile, terminating near the crown of ridge. Quality good throughout; granite boulders on the crown of ridges and near the river edge, but soil good. Myrtle in low ground.

### 6TH MILE.

Attained the level sidling on ridge at 2 chains; commenced dipping into a gully at 6 chains. At 12·20-30 links crossed a small stream (a tributary of the little river crossed on last mile), and gained the summit of a very steep gully on the opposite side at 20 chains. Here I got on undulating ground, which continued to the end of the mile, crossing several small streams. At and up to 54 chains the vegetation consisted of myrtle, swamp gum, sassafras, and fern trees, but from that point there are only myrtle and fern trees. Quality first class.

### 7TH MILE.

At 6 chains swamp gum again appear, and continue to the half mile crossing over four small streams containing beds of basaltic shingly pebbles. At 50 chains there is a decided change in the forest, from which point to 70·41 links (where I crossed a fine stream 10 links wide) stringy bark, white myrtle saplings, and stunted fern trees appear, whilst the soil is not as good; but on rising from this stream I entered immediately on first-class soil, and which continued throughout. Character first class with the exception named.

### 8TH MILE.

Crossed a deep gully with a fine stream at 1740 links, and passed over the very richest of land to the 36th chain. From this point to the 43rd I got into indifferent sandy and rocky ground, which appeared to run northerly, but only a few chains westerly. From this point to the end the soil is of the very best description. At 5100-20 links I crossed a fine stream, and ascended a very steep ridge reaching the top at 70 chains. Quality first class with the exception named.

### 9TH MILE.

The ground throughout this mile cannot be surpassed in quality. It is of the richest kind. I kept gradually rising to the 66th chain, crossing 10 small streams—one 15 links wide, and passing through a magnificent belt of gum trees, occasional myrtle and sassafras, and any quantity of immense fern trees, from which point to the end I descended into a steep gully, the mile terminating about half-way down. Rocky granite boulders on this hill, but good soil nevertheless.

I am now busy on the tenth mile. I may here mention the (I may say) total absence of silver wattle, so abundantly fallen across in my exploring expedition through this rich district in December, 1863. My route, as you are aware, lay about 4 miles north of my present bearing on that occasion. I have also been unable to fall across any of our marked trees, and I think we must now have passed my southerly line to George's River. Surely we are nearly through into barren land, although I would wish this rich soil to continue to Ringarooma, notwithstanding the hardships we are enduring. It is the roughest winter I have yet experienced in Tasmania, and if we escape a grave-yard cough by the time we finish I shall consider it marvellous. We are eleven in number, besides one man and one horse conveying rations.

As yet the only living thing we have seen has been parrots, rats, and one wombat, which latter, by bad management, we lost. Further particulars as I proceed. I may add that this track, when completed through, will be one of the finest things that could have been done towards the opening up and developing the new Country, and will throw more light upon the matter than a hundred explorations similar to mine in 1863 can possibly do.

I have the honor to be,  
Sir,

Your very obedient Servant,  
(Signed) JOHN THOMAS.

J. E. CALDER, *Esq.*, *Surveyor-General*.

*Camp on the Saddle of the Dividing Range,*  
*1st August, 1867.*

10TH MILE.

Crossed a fine stream at 500-23 links, and rose sharply to a comparatively level tract of ground at 12 chains. Continued rising gradually throughout, crossing two small streams and passing through Myrtle, Swamp Gum, Sassafras, and large Fern trees to the 65th chain, when I entered a Myrtle Forest with large Fern trees only, which continued to the end. Quality first class.

11TH MILE.

Still rising gradually to 30 chains, when I commenced dipping into a steep gully, which I crossed at 45-87 links. Rose a steep hill, and attained the summit at 66 chains: kept gradually falling to the end. At 20 chains on this mile I got through the good land, which appeared to continue to the north, south, and south-west of me, into rocky ground, consisting of a very hard, compact stone, of a clayey nature, but containing considerable grit notwithstanding. This rock is similar to the one found on the dividing range known as the Billycock Tier, between Ringarooma and the Arnon rivers, and is also identical with a stone I have seen near the Ford on the Kentish track over the River Forth: it has undergone extreme heat. The Forest still continued the same in vegetation to the 66th chain, where the Myrtle becomes stunted and dwarfish. From this point I saw to the north of me an open plain, apparently of considerable magnitude. I wonder if this should turn out to be the ground mentioned by Count Strzelecki, I think, as lying somewhere in this direction. I cannot give you the bearing of it, as I only saw it in shifting camp, and the instrument was some distance ahead. I will, however, ascertain the bearing of it on my return. It seemed to lay about five miles north of me.

12TH MILE.

Crossed a fine little stream at 11 chains, and attained the level sidling ground on the opposite side at 18 chains, and entered a Myrtle Forest. Crossed another stream at 3470-80 links, and rose sharply to the 43rd chain, when I attained the level sidling and got on to good soil again, vegetation, Myrtle, Sassafras, and large Fern trees. At 50 chains got the first view of Mount Victoria since the 5th mile, bearing S. 2° W.; and at the end of the mile found it due south of me. Crossed a dry creek at 63 chains, and at 73 chains got through the good land (which seemed to continue north and south of me) into a stunted bed of Myrtle and Celery Top Pine of considerable size, with a thickness of moss covering the ground in some places of two feet,—the soil being of a white speuy nature.

13TH MILE.

The same character of land continued to 4293, when I crossed a small stream and once more passed through into first-class soil (Myrtle, Sassafras, and large Fern trees), and crossed the dividing range between the two rivers at 60 chains. From this point to the end the ground kept gradually dipping and improving, terminating in very rich soil.

14TH MILE.

Still dipping easy, and entering a Gum Forest with an under-scrub of Dogwood, Muskwood, and large Fern trees. At 10 chains had a fine view of the Ringarooma Valley, Mount Maurice, Billycock Tier, Mount Horror; also, the west end of Mr. J. R. Scott's ground, bearing West 15° North of the track. I saw also the smoke rising from the clearings in Scott's New Country. I have not chained beyond the first quarter of a mile: I will therefore furnish the additional particulars in my next.

I have the honor, &c.,

(Signed) JOHN THOMAS, *District Surveyor*.

J. E. CALDER, *Esq.*, *Surveyor-General, Hobart Town*.

Fingal, 20th August, 1867.

SIR,

I BEG hereunder to give you a further and closing account of my progress with the Horse Track.

14TH MILE.

Kept dipping easy to the 75th chain, when I went steep into a valley that kept opening up from the north, the mile terminating near the stream. Quality—Excellent soil, but very full of small stones (claystone) to the 70th chain. Gum Forest.

15TH MILE.

Crossed a fine stream at 260-96 links, and rose very sharp to the crown of spur at 12 chains, Mount Victoria, bearing South  $17^{\circ}$  East. Kept dipping easy to the 27th chain. From this point to the Ringarooma River I may say that the land continued undulating, and of one uniform first-class character. Recrossed the same stream at 6125-60 links, which continued to run parallel with me to the Dorset.

16TH MILE.

At 5883-5917 links the same stream crossed my track again, following me within a couple of chains or so to the end.

17TH MILE.

At 2100-2600 links I crossed a soft bottom, which I had to corduroy with Gum saplings for several chains. Crossed a fine stream at 2630-85 links, and a second at 3000-6 links, being, I believe, overflows from the Rivulet that continued with me from the commencement of the 15th Mile. At 3225-3323 links I crossed a fine river running north, which I took to be the Dorset; however, at 5360-95 links I came across another stream, infinitely smaller than the former, which turned out to be the adopted Dorset; and I soon fell across Mr. Brown's traverse stakes of that River, which my man Styles instantly recognised as being near the divisionary line between Fry and Maggs' selections,—and his surmises were correct, for at 420 links south of my crossing place I found the line.

In a very short distance we found Mr. Fry's clearings, hut, &c., occupied at present by one of Mr. Fry's sons and a man. Mr. Fry was good enough to allow me to turn my pack-horse into his paddocks, whilst the men and myself were plentifully supplied with vegetables, viz.—potatoes, turnips (Swedes), carrots, and parsnips, of the choicest kind ever grown in the Island, the green fodder being up to the horse's knees.

The true Dorset, or parent stream, is evidently the one I crossed first at about 20 chains east of the one adopted, and this, very likely, will account for the error in position made which necessitated a re-survey of the lots selected by Thompson and others. Here I found myself too far south of the position I thought I was in, and I had to alter my bearing to West  $15^{\circ}$  North; and kept in the River flat to the end of the mile.

18TH MILE.

Rose a bank from River flat at 3-400 links, and crossed a small stream at 1415-25. At 35 chains, with an offset North of 40 links, came upon an old corner pin of a cancelled line. At 5435 and 5770 crossed two small streams; and at 5830 the road through Maggs' block was crossed.

19TH MILE.

Crossed Maggs' back line at 236 links, and a fine stream 20 links wide at 1673-95. Crossed a surveyed line at 29 chains, and another at 7852,—a small stream crossing at the end of the mile.

20TH MILE.

Crossed a small stream at 3620 links, and came on my road traverse to Boon's block at 3964 links, which I followed down to the junction with the cleared road from Bridport at the ford on the Ringarooma River,—the distance being 19 miles 74 chains 27 links.

I completed the work early on Saturday last, and started from Ringarooma on foot on Sunday morning, reaching Goshen (Warland's selection) on George's River that evening, and this place the following day.

I am busy preparing the Plan and Report, which I will forward you when completed, together with much important matter that can only be furnished when accompanied by a Plan of the country I passed through.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

(Signed) JOHN THOMAS.

J. E. CALDER, *Esq.*, *Surveyor-General.*

(Copy.)

*Fingal, 2nd September, 1867.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honor herewith of forwarding you a Plan of the Horse Track through Gould's Country to the Ringarooma River. The distance is 19 miles 74 chains 27 links, and in a straight line about  $17\frac{1}{2}$  miles; but this would be considerably reduced if chained horizontally. The Saddle, or dividing range, will require a careful examination in case a road survey is made to connect Ringarooma with George's Bay, as very likely a lower point may be found than the one I have crossed at, although I have seen no difficulty whatever in laying out a road across my route.

From the Hill marked (A) on Plan I got a clear view of George's River valley to the Bay; and I am of opinion that a road through the low ground on the south side of that hill will be the most advisable to take, as it leads from the Flat marked (B) on the accompanying lithographed sketch plan, at the intersection of my exploring route in December, 1863, with George's River, and to all appearances there are no difficulties in the way of having an easy line of road; but, as I have before named, the locality should be subjected to a close inspection, and the line ran from the lowest Saddle (if practicable) on the dividing range, East and West.

There will be no difficulty whatever in the construction of a road at a very moderate cost from the Flat named to Goshen (Stieglitz's selection, now Warland), thus connecting it with the Bay, as there is a good bush road from that point.

The range on the Ringarooma side of the Saddle offers no difficulties, and a short distance will reach the Flat.

The rivers C, D, E, and F, on the East side of the Saddle, together with the Ransom River not shown on Plan, but to which I beg to refer you to my plan of the river surveys of the Groom (and Ransom), are well adapted as frontage streams, being from 25 to 50 links wide; and previous to any roads being surveyed, I would recommend the sub-divisions on the streams named to be made, or a survey of the streams, as the local knowledge thereby gained ought to prevent the possibility of a very great error being made in the selection of a good and permanent route.

The same rule applies to the stream that accompanied my track from the 14th mile to the new River on the west side of the Saddle, which also may be added as the most important stream on the Ringarooma side.

The cross tracks north and south should, in my opinion, be cut in accordance with the intention of the Government when I was in town in June last, as it will throw more light on the subject, and give intending settlers a better idea of the country than any statement I can make; and I court enquiry and examination, as I believe that I have not overdone the matter in my Progress Reports to you, and I much question whether such another tract of available Crown land in the vicinity of a good shipping port can be found in the Island. At any rate should the Government not feel disposed to cut all the tracks proposed in June, I would strongly recommend that one should be run in the vicinity of the 9th mile on plan into the open plain mentioned in my Progress Report as having been seen on the 11th mile, and another at the 16th mile towards Mount Victoria and northerly as well, and a third from the commencement of the horse track.

These three tracks are really most advisable to run, as they will give, in addition to the information I have named, a pretty correct idea of the area of good land.

Tracks of the description I have recently cleared are by far preferable to any prospecting explorations, and must give far greater encouragement to selectors than when they have to push their way through the scrub, with little or no chance of judging for themselves the nature and quality of the ground.

The bearing of George's River Valley from point (A.) on plan is E.  $5^{\circ}$  S.

I think a good easy road can be obtained from the Ringarooma River to George's Bay in about 30 miles (8 or 9 of it, I may say, being completed), George's River Valley being nearly straight to Goshen from point B on lithograph.

The Road should be surveyed and slightly modified from the latter place to the bay.

The Ringarooma River is about equidistant between Bridport and George's Bay. The latter is certainly the best shipping place, and is considerably nearer to most Crown lands in that district, and offers but few obstructions.

The rivulet that empties itself into the new River on the 17th mile has on its banks land of the choicest description, and very easily cleared.

The general description of the ground on the east side of the saddle (with the exception of one or two instances) is not difficult to clear: a fire-stick in the dry season will remove much of it. From what I have seen of the Huon and the Devon districts, Gould's Country and the Ringarooma Country are capable of being brought under cultivation at a less cost than either.

It is all more or less of a hilly character, but, with the exception of the margin of some of the streams, it is all capable of being ploughed. It is also well watered.

I have the honor to be,  
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,  
(Signed) JOHN THOMAS.

J. E. CALDER, *Esq.*, *Surveyor-General, Hobart Town.*