

(No. 100.)



1860.

T A S M A N I A.

H U O N D I S T R I C T.

CROWN LANDS. MR. TULLY'S REPORT.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Colonial Treasurer, and ordered by the House to be printed, 18 September, 1860.



Macquarie-street, 15th September, 1860.

SIR,

IN compliance with the request contained in your letter of the 12th instant, I have the honor to submit the following Report respecting the Crown Lands in the southern part of the Huon District, and have also taken the liberty of appending some remarks and suggestions of my own as to the best means of rendering available the large area of valuable land in that quarter of the Colony.

There has been but a very small proportion of the country extending from Esperance to Recherche Bay alienated from the crown, and throughout its vast extent a very considerable amount of superior land exists. If we take the distance between the two places above mentioned as twenty miles, and assuming that all lands within ten miles from the Coast may be considered accessible, there are consequently 130,000 acres, of which four-fifths are now available for either purchase or rental: much of this large area is, of course, poor and worthless, but scattered throughout are portions which, for richness of soil and other advantages, will bear comparison with any part of the Island.

To these localities I beg therefore to draw your attention.

The valleys of the three rivers or rivulets which flow into Port Esperance contain first-rate land, which is admirably adapted for small agricultural farms of from forty to fifty acres. At the Esperance River there is a very considerable area of excellent ground, which only requires a road to exhibit its character, and perhaps induce purchasers. Surrounding the Bay, and extending towards the Huon in the direction of the new track, there is to be found land of the same description, and situated in an equally favourable position. From Esperance to Southport the same feature is to be observed; but the extent in the latter case is far greater than in any other portion of the District. It has, however, a drawback in being more hilly and scrubby than other localities, and consequently less likely to be sought after at present. At the back of Lady's Bay there is a very valuable tract which I am confident would sell well, if not marked off in lots too large for the means of those who live in the immediate neighbourhood.

I cannot speak so favourably of the country in the vicinity of Southport, which is generally sandy and barren. The same character extends to the head of both narrows, when the soil improves with the usual change from the open forest to thick underwood of the most impenetrable nature. The banks of the Lune and Southport Rivers are good, but the land deteriorates as the distance from the rivers increases.

From Southport to Recherche Bay large open plains exist, covered with the button grass, and resembling in every respect the country to the westward. I have been over these plains in every direction, but have seen scarcely any portion of them fit for cultivation: they are, however, well adapted for pasturage, and are superior to much land in the Interior for which lessees can be easily found. The circumstances of their position form the only obstacle to their settlement or occupation by sheep, though why they have not been taken up as cattle runs seems to me a matter of surprise.

At Recherche Bay there is a change for the better. The character of the land alters, and a rich soil extends along the western side of the Bay for some miles, even to the water's edge. I am confident that this locality will, one day or other, become important; for, in addition to the excellence of the land, the timber in this quarter is especially fine, and attains a size seldom equalled elsewhere.

Throughout the District that I have now roughly sketched, there are many patches of ground whose position it would be difficult to describe in the absence of a plan. They are, however, sufficiently extensive to afford scope and livelihood for hundreds of families, and

would, in my opinion, warrant the Government to expend money in opening them up. My own knowledge of this part of the Island leads me to the opinion that there cannot be less than 30,000 acres of superior land now lying open, which only requires public attention to be drawn to it, and the advantages and working of the Waste Lands Act to be more widely known, to secure a very large increase of Settlers, and establish a population of the same description as that now settled on the banks of the Mersey and Leven.

The sandstone generally alternates with greenstone throughout the whole of the above described District, and the boundaries of the latter formation indicate with tolerable accuracy the area suitable for Agriculture. The coal at Southport and Recherche is of excellent quality, and I believe, unlimited in supply. I am therefore surprised that it has not, ere this, attracted more notice. As worked in connection with a Tramway, for which the country is admirably situated, it would, I am confident, prove a most profitable investment. The seam existing south of Southport, and which crops out at the Coast, could be easily worked in this way, and at an exceedingly moderate outlay, as there would be no Mining expenses beyond those required in establishing communication with the Shipping harbour.

The climate along the Coast is also admirably adapted for farming. Frosts are in some places comparatively unknown, and the most luxuriant vegetation prevails during the entire year. At Hope Island I have known two crops of potatoes grown in the twelve months; and I have been assured that it would be possible to grow three. So mild and genial are the seasons, that summer resembles spring, and the winter temperature is never sufficiently low to check the growth of the most tender plant. With such advantages as these the farmer will have surely little cause to grumble.

The apparent want of interest which the public take in this quarter of the Island may, perhaps, be explained by the want of sympathy with the class which now forms the only population of these wilds, and the fact of so few persons having made homes for themselves in this particular locality. Perhaps there is no greater stimulus to settle a district than example, but, with scarcely an exception, nothing has been done in this way south of the Huon. The few patches of cultivation now existing are mainly confined to clearings that had been made by Government labour in the Township Reserves of Southport and Esperance.

What is required, in addition to the necessary assistance from Government in making Roads, is to have a more complete knowledge of the working of the Waste Lands Act disseminated amongst the class to whom we must look for the settlement of this vast territory. For I am persuaded that a thorough ignorance must exist amongst the population, or they would otherwise have taken advantage of the opportunity which the Act affords them of securing a lot in proportion to their means, at an almost nominal price, when the payments are spread over eight years. I am the more confident of this when I consider that at least 50 per cent. of the inhabitants have it in their power to purchase say 50 acres, and so improve their condition in a manner most gratifying to themselves. This reluctance to avail themselves of a certain and lasting advantage must proceed from the cause I have alluded to; and so important in my mind is the necessity for a remedy, that I would beg most respectfully that some action be taken to ensure publicity of our liberal Land Regulations amongst the class who will benefit most by them, and who, by enriching themselves, will improve also the value of the extensive Waste Lands in the south portion of the Colony.

I should very much wish to see a few persons, who have means, take some ground and apply themselves to the task of clearing, with a determination to succeed; for I am certain that the latter end can be attained at this side of the Island. The North Coast does, I believe, possess certain advantages, which the people in that quarter have not been slow to take advantage of; but assuming that the land is equally good, in which I am carried out by my own personal experience, the margin of profit in farming these fertile soils is sufficiently wide to allow for our less favorable position, and the higher cost of clearing, which seems to obtain on this side compared with that usually paid in the District of Devon.

While capital can demand such high interest in other ways, it cannot be expected that individuals will invest in a speculation which, though not by any means doubtful, is still attended with many inconveniences in connection with labour, and requires a close attention for which all are not qualified. The class to whom the Colony must look, in the present case, as the future occupants of the soil, are the working men, whose diligence has enabled them to lay by a few pounds, and whose best capital is their own labour. The progress of such men is certain, though there may be a sharp struggle at first: I believe that any man will attain independence who is not afraid to work hard and live economically. In estimating a man's labour as equal to clear five acres in a year, we have the best means of judging what it is worth when applied to cultivation. I do not consider that I have exceeded the practical limit in assigning the sum of £100 as the yield of the land, in the lowest estimate of quantity and price; and this, of course,

is exclusive of other sources of profit. With such a sum—and I believe it would be ensured to all who commence with an industrious spirit—a man could do much to extend his place, and render himself more comfortable: not only would he confer a benefit on himself, but he would prove a standing example for others to follow his course, and attain a similar success.

In conclusion, I have again to express my opinion that a judicious expenditure of money in opening up lands which are now inaccessible by clearing tracks at first, and afterwards improving them in proportion as the number of settlers increased, and by at once taking measures to extend the knowledge of the benefits arising from the present Land Regulations amongst the class who have not had an opportunity of making an acquaintance with the advantages which are now within the grasp of the man with small means.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your very obedient Servant,

W. ALCOCK TULLY, *Inspecting Surveyor.*

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

A D D E N D U M.

Macquarie-street, 11 October, 1860.

SIR,

I HAVE much pleasure in again submitting, for your information, the following particulars with respect to the Waste Lands in the northern portion of the Huon District, which were not included in my Report of the 15th ultimo; and I trust that they may prove useful in directing your attention to special localities during your proposed visit to that part of the Colony.

The short time at my disposal, as I leave town to-day, will only permit me to draw a very brief and general description of the places to which I beg to draw your attention. I shall therefore confine myself to describing the position of the several tracts, as I know you will have an opportunity of estimating their value by personal inspection, and determining at the same time the best means of making them available.

I have roughly sketched in red ink, on the accompanying tracings, the approximate situations of the lands which I think would repay a careful examination. They possess the important advantages of good soil and a facility of access, with a moderate outlay, and would, I am confident meet with ready sale, if marked off in small-sized lots, with an assured right of communication through private property (if required) to the nearest shipping place.

This latter point is one which requires immediate consideration, as I am aware of lands now lying useless, both at the back of Franklin Township and at the opposite side of the Huon River, in consequence of the difficulty of obtaining a road without paying a heavy compensation. This, you will understand, deters persons from making selections in spots which would have been long since occupied under other circumstances; as individually they are unable to meet the demands of the frontage proprietors, who are oftentimes most obstructive and exacting.

In my former letter I strongly insisted on the necessity of having roads not only marked out, but also cleared and formed, so as to allow every one to go up to the land and judge for himself. This, I believe, will be found of material service in securing purchasers; for I have known, in my own experience, of lots being thrown up, where the approach was almost impracticable without an amount of laborious exertion, which prevented many from visiting their lots, and seeing the ground for which they applied.

The country between Hobart Town and the Huon, extending along both tracks between the above-mentioned places, is too well known to require any notice at my hands. I may, however, allude to the existence of a very considerable extent of good land at the head of the Mountain River, which is by no means so heavily timbered as that further to the southward, and would not, I am confident, cost more than one-half the expense of clearing the latter. Some years since I recollect travelling through this part of the country with two of the Huon settlers, and observing the same character continued to the North West Bay River, at a point about a mile and a half above the new Huon Road. In the direction of New Norfolk there is a large tract of excellent ground, but of which little is known except that a road has been marked through it, which the Government might now re-open with advantage.

At the back of the Franklin Township there is a very large area adapted for agricultural farms. I cannot estimate the extent with any degree of certainty, but I have seen it from various points, and have invariably noticed it as possessing the same features on all sides. It may be considered a plateau, intersected with low gullies which feed the streams flowing into the Huon on the north and east, and into tributaries of the same on the west. This plateau has been formed by the protrusion of greenstone through the shale and sandstones, which are usually found at the lowest points of the valleys where they have been exposed by denudation. I believe the best land is confined to this formation, which, perhaps, will be found to continue in a more irregular manner to the slates and quartz, of which, I have been informed, the quartz mountains are composed.

At the Kermadec River, and along the course of the several streams flowing into Hospital Bay, there is a most valuable country, of which a very large extent was taken up under the present Land Regulations; but the difficulty of access proved so great an obstacle, even

to those who wished to examine their selections, that not a single purchase was effected. In this immediate locality the opening of a road from the head of the existing tramway, for about four or five miles, would prove of great advantage in disposing of the land, which possesses all the conditions for a flourishing settlement. From this point to Port Esperance there is a very fair proportion of excellent land, of which the new track from the latter place to Surge's Bay affords the most complete evidence.

On the eastern bank of the Huon River, behind Mr. Kellaway's property at the Sand Fly Rivulet, there is some ground which is admirably adapted for small farms: but there is some misconception about a right of way through the front lot, which has deterred many from applying for the land who otherwise would have desired to settle there. This is a matter in which, I am confident, your personal interference would be found most useful; and I think you will agree with me in believing, when you have an opportunity of examining the locality, that the marking and proclamation of a road would produce a most successful result in finding occupiers for the soil.

The lands referred to in this Report form a stock which, if judiciously laid out, will augment very considerably the Land Revenue of the Colony: but I am of opinion that the size of the lots ought not to exceed fifty acres, and, if possible, each should come within the limit of credit, which in itself is an incentive to purchase, and best suits the condition of those to whom the Colony must mainly look for the settlement of this vast District.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

W. ALCOCK TULLY, *Inspecting Surveyor.*

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